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# MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE
OF
# MADAME D'ÉPINAY

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MADAME D'EPINAY

THE

# MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

# MADAME D'ÉPINAY

*TRANSLATED*

*WITH INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF NOTES*

BY

J. H. FREESE

*IN THREE VOLUMES—VOL. I*

*"A lively, entertaining book, relating, in an agreeable manner, the opinions and habits of many remarkable men."*—SYDNEY SMITH.

LONDON

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE present most interesting work is the Eighth in my Collection of Historic Memoirs, and I do not think it necessary to give any reason for including it, for the original from which this first translation has been made is of the utmost rarity; further, no other work contains the Historic accounts and the particulars of peculiar interest, known only to a very few, which this work contains, so that it was bound to have a place found for it in the series.

H. S. NICHOLS.

LONDON, *22nd May, 1897.*

# TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Of the many imperfections of this translation, the first which has ever appeared in English, the Translator is fully aware. The allusions are frequently obscure, and the French by no means always easy.

The translation is made from the *editio princeps* in three volumes, Paris, 1818, which, although perhaps not the best,[1] contains more material than later ones.

The Introduction, which lays claim neither to originality nor completeness, is intended rather to be suggestive, and to direct the reader's attention to the more detailed works mentioned in the *Bibliography*, to which the Translator begs to express his indebtedness.

[1] See Introduction.

# INTRODUCTION

MADAME D'ÉPINAY undoubtedly owes her reputation in great measure to Rousseau's *Confessions* and her connection with Grimm, who remained her loyal friend up to the time of her death, and to whom, indirectly, the publication of her *Memoirs* was due. Had Rousseau kept silence as to the grievances, real or imaginary, connected with his stay and retirement from the Hermitage, her name and personality would certainly not have been brought so prominently into notice; but nevertheless, although Madame d'Épinay may not deserve the title of a distinguished literary woman, her *Memoirs* are distinctly valuable. This "rough draft of a romance," as it has been called, presented sometimes in the form of a private Diary, sometimes of letters addressed to her guardian, is described by Sainte-Beuve as an authentic chronicle of the manners of her age.

It was not until 35 years after her death that the *Memoirs* were published, from one of the two MSS. which were bequeathed to Grimm, and seized in 1794 with the rest of his library. This copy was bought by Brunet, the author of the *Manuel du Libraire*, and published in 3 vols. (Paris, 1818). In the original MS. the principal

characters were represented under fictitious names;[1] the anonymous editor (Parison) restored the real ones. Three editions were sold in the same year. This MS. is now in the National Archives. An abridged edition was published by L. Énault (Paris, 1855), which was reprinted by M. P. Boiteau, with notes written in a somewhat uninviting style, and containing matter not specially acceptable to the ordinary reader; besides, he writes too avowedly as a partisan of Rousseau, in that portion of the work relating to the latter's residence at the Hermitage. Lucien Perey (Mademoiselle Herpin) and Gaston Maugras, who had previously (in 1881) published the *Correspondance de l'Abbé Galiani*,[2] have had access to the second of the MSS. mentioned above, part of which is in the National Archives, and part in the Arsenal Library. As the result of their examination, they have discovered that the preceding edition of the *Memoirs* is in great measure nothing more than an extract or abridgment. Not only have the earlier editors entirely disregarded the first *cahiers* of the MS., but have in many cases unwarrantably abbreviated the letters which they have given to the public. Hitherto, the chief sources of the history of Madame d'Épinay's later years were

[1] The authoress herself appears as Madame de Montbrillant, Rousseau as René, Grimm as Volx, Diderot as Garnier.

[2] One of the wittiest and most sarcastic men of the century, and Madame d'Épinay's friend and correspondent from 1769 to the time of her death.

the Abbé Galiani's Correspondence and Diderot's Letters to Sophie Volland. Perey and Maugras have succeeded in finding the last part of the Memoirs, hitherto supposed to be lost, in the MSS. of the Arsenal Library, amongst Diderot's papers. This MS. contains *cahiers* 141-187, and is called *Madame de Rambures: fragmens d'un roman inédit.* It is not known why the MS. should have been thus divided, part going to the Archives, and part to the Arsenal, but there is no doubt that the whole was in Grimm's house, when it was plundered by the Jacobins in 1794. The *Memoirs* end in 1763, at the time when Madame d'Épinay was left in a state of great destitution, in consequence of her husband's name being struck out of the list of "farmers-general" owing to his persistent extravagance and reckless mode of life, and when Grimm fell into disgrace with the French Government. From this date, Perey and Maugras, chiefly with the aid of numerous letters and papers communicated to them by members of the D'Épinay family, the correspondence between Diderot and Mademoiselle Volland, Grimm and Catherine II., Voltaire, and Galiani, as well as various MSS. in the National Library and the Archives, have been able to continue the *Memoirs* and thus to give an account of Madame d'Épinay's life to the day of her death. The result of their labours has been the two volumes forming the *Histoire d'une femme du monde au XVIII^e^ siècle*, divided into two parts, *La Jeunesse de Madame d'Épinay*

(vol. i.), and *Les dernières années de Madame d'Épinay* (vol. ii.). To this work all who desire fuller information than is to be found in the present Translation of the *Memoirs* as we have them must be referred; but, considering the somewhat disconnected form, inseparable from the twofold nature in which the latter are cast, it will not be out of place, and, it is to be hoped, not uninteresting, to give a connected sketch of the life of the authoress, drawn from the Memoirs themselves, and supplemented by additional information from Perey and Maugras' book, and other works mentioned in the *Bibliography*.

Madame d'Épinay's full name was Louise Florence Pétronille Tardieu d'Esclavelles. She was born at Valenciennes on the 11th of March, 1726, and died at Paris on the 17th of April, 1783. Her father was the Baron Tardieu d'Esclavelles, a distinguished officer of good family, but poor; her mother, Angélique Prouveur de Preux. The death of her father, when she was in her eleventh year, left the widow and child in straitened circumstances. Her relatives were, on the one side, of distinguished family, but not in affluent circumstances; on the other, rich but *bourgeois*. To the former class belonged her great-aunt, the Marquise de Roncherolles, and her uncle, M. de Preux; to the latter, her mother's sister, Madame de Bellegarde, the wife of a wealthy farmer-general. The Marquise, like many impoverished gentlewomen, lived contentedly in a convent on an income of 2,000 *livres*, Madame de Bellegarde

in a splendid house in the Rue St. Honoré. The child divided her early years between these two homes, so different in every way. Madame de Bellegarde appears to have been by no means a pleasant woman — mean, ever ready to reproach her niece with her poverty, and to put little affronts upon her. Her mother, after her husband's death, had gone to Valenciennes, in order to make arrangements concerning her scanty inheritance, and, on her return to Paris, decided to let her daughter be brought up in the convent with her great-aunt. At the same time she refused the offer of M. de Preux, a jovial country squire, to have them both to live with him; he, however, insisted upon her accepting a yearly sum of 100 *louis* in place of his hospitality.

Louise remained in the convent for three years, during which time her education was very elementary. She learned to read and write, to draw, and play the harpsichord, good behaviour and modesty of demeanour being considered of greater importance in a convent than elegant accomplishments. During this time she developed two characteristics: great shyness and timidity in the presence of strangers, and a fondness for letter-writing and keeping a diary of the events of her life, accompanied by her own opinions and comments upon the same.

Her aunt Bellegarde, who had never treated her very kindly, died in 1740. Her family consisted of four sons and two daughters. The eldest daughter was already married to M. de Lucé;

the youngest, Elisabeth (Mimi), afterwards Madame d'Houdetot, of whom we hear so much in connection with Rousseau, was being brought up in the house. The eldest son, who was of weak intellect, was in a convent; the second was Denis-Joseph, with the additional name of De la Live, probably derived from some property belonging to the family. A childish flirtation between him and Louise seemed likely to ripen into something stronger: this was foreseen by Madame de Bellegarde, who was highly indignant when she detected her son in the act of surreptitiously slipping a note into Louise's hand. Even on her death-bed, the ruling passion was strong within her, and she begged her husband to send her son away on a journey, in order to obviate the possibility of his marriage with a poor relation, which seemed hateful to the purse-proud woman. But M. de Bellegarde was an easy-going person, who was very fond of Louise, and was content to let matters run their course. After his wife's death, Louise's mother went to keep house for him and look after the education of his younger children. Thus Denis and Louise were thrown more and more together. The young man (who had further taken the name of D'Épinay from the Château D'Épinay) had grown more and more enamoured of his cousin, and left no stone unturned to secure her hand: on one occasion he even went so far as to pretend madness, allowed himself to be shut up in St. Quentin, jumped out

of the window, and declared that he would go to La Trappe,[1] and become a monk. His father, who was very fond of him, broke his promise to his dying wife, and consented to Denis's marriage with Louise, although he had considerable difficulty in overcoming Madame d'Esclavelles' pride, who was afraid of incurring the reproach that she had abused her position to bring about the match. The wedding at length took place on the 23rd of December, 1745.

Not being rich enough to keep up an establishment, the newly-married couple continued to live in M. de Bellegarde's house. The family circle included, amongst others, M. d'Épinay's brother, La Live de Jully, of whom we hear a certain amount in the Memoirs, who was a good sort of fellow, without much moral principle, devoted to art, and an enthusiastic collector. It soon became evident that the marriage was not destined to turn out a happy one; after about two months, M. d'Épinay began to neglect his wife. Her remonstrances were in vain; and, to an inexperienced mind like hers, unversed in the ways of the world, De Jully's attempts at consolation seemed only an aggravation of her misfortunes, and to be adding insult to injury. At last, her husband's conduct became so bad, that her former affection for him changed to contempt, and a kind of divorce (*séparation de*

[1] A famous Abbey, the inmates of which condemned themselves to perpetual silence.

*biens*)[1] was agreed upon between them, which gave Madame d'Épinay her freedom.

Domestic unhappiness naturally induced her to seek happiness or its substitute elsewhere; besides, M. d'Epinay himself recommended his wife to go into society, amuse herself, and even form "friendships," such as the morals of the time regarded very indulgently, and against which her great-aunt had already warned her. Madame d'Épinay was unfortunately only too ready to fall in with her husband's suggestions, nor was she surrounded by persons likely to exercise a beneficial influence over her. Her mother was a very worthy person, but narrow-minded, excessively devout and austere, with a great respect for the opinion of the world. Her father-in-law, M. de Bellegarde, although sensible and well-meaning, was hopelessly indolent, and her brother-in-law was too much a man of the world to be able to appreciate the shock caused to her sensitive mind by the discovery of her husband's infidelities.

She was certainly not fortunate in her female friends at this period. First amongst these we may mention Madame Darty (or D'Arty), the youngest daughter of Samuel Bernard, the wealthiest financier of his time. Madame d'Épinay tells us that she was for a long time prejudiced against her, owing to her "curious features," but her prejudices disappeared when they became more intimate. Madame Darty seems to have played the part of society Mentor with considerable success. She took Madame d'Épinay to the Bal de

[1] Separation of property stipulated in the marriage contract.

l'Opéra without any male escort; and, on another occasion, to supper with Françœur, a famous violinist and composer. The latter incident led to a scene between Madame d'Épinay and her husband, who was not slow to take advantage of his wife's indiscretion. The result was that she swore solemnly never to see Madame Darty again, and she kept her word; but her place was taken by another, whose influence was destined to prove far more dangerous.

This was Mademoiselle d'Ette, of whom a well-drawn character-portrait is given in the *Memoirs*. Diderot says of her: "Her face is like a bowl of milk into which some rose-leaves have been thrown;" and Rousseau, speaking of his first introduction to Madame d'Épinay, says "the latter had a female friend, a Mademoiselle d'Ette, who was said to be of a very spiteful disposition; she lived with the Chevalier de Valory, whose temper was by no means one of the best." M. d'Epinay himself introduced Mademoiselle d'Ette to his wife, and the old people approved of the acquaintance; in two months they had become firm friends. Observing her friend's *ennui* and melancholy, Mademoiselle d'Ette recommended her to take a lover, as the best means of curing them. Madame d'Epinay was at first disgusted, and refused to entertain the idea; but when she at last felt that she could no longer entertain any affection for her husband, she began to waver, and at this moment Francueil, the very type of a "lover," appeared upon the scene. This Dupin de Francueil

was the son of Dupin, a farmer-general, and a married man. According to Rousseau, his wife was ugly, and adored a husband who did not return her affection. The story of the *liaison* with Francueil is fully detailed by the authoress herself in the Memoirs, and nothing need be added.

In the spring of 1749, we find Madame d'Épinay in the country, on the Épinay estate, a short distance from Saint-Denis, on the banks of the Seine, where M. de Bellegarde possessed a considerable amount of property. She had become entirely independent of her husband, who was frequently away on matters connected with the duties of his office, and it was left to Francueil to console her. He introduced his friends to her, assisted her in the acquirement of polite accomplishments, and invented amusements for her.

At this time Madame d'Épinay was 25 years of age. Madame Sand calls her "positively ugly," while admitting that her features were very expressive and that her charms were irresistible. She had large and expressive black eyes, and her black hair was set off by the extreme pallor of her complexion. She was thin, short, and unhealthy-looking. In regard to her intellectual capacities, she was more accurate than brilliant, more reflective than imaginative, somewhat slow and timid in her ideas, which led to a certain reserve and coldness in conversation. Rousseau's opinion of her was that she was "true without being frank."[1] Kindly, simple, forgiving, unsuspicious, never mak-

[1] *Vraie sans être franche.*

ing up her mind what course to pursue until too late, hesitating between good and evil, her character frequently exhibited inconsistencies. But, in spite of her failings, she was honourable, had a high sense of duty, and courage to carry out what she considered incumbent upon her. Her temper was even—except on occasions when she was provoked beyond endurance, as by her husband or Duclos—and she was affectionate and capable of great devotion. We must not blame her too much for her connection with Francueil; the manners of the 18th century in France looked indulgently upon a "lover," provided he had the reputation of being as "honourable" a man as was possible under the circumstances.

Madame d'Houdetot, M. d'Épinay's sister, was a few years younger than Madame d'Epinay. An account of her curious marriage is given in the Memoirs; she and her husband never saw each other before the day on which the contract was signed. M. d'Houdetot was young, ugly, without means, and devoted to a married woman. Madame d'Houdetot plays an important part in Rousseau's *Confessions*. Although anything but beautiful—she was pitted with the small-pox and short-sighted—she is acknowledged to have been a very charming woman: "she is the most happily-constituted woman that I know," says Madame d'Épinay. She formed an intimate connection with Saint-Lambert,[1] which, although

[1] Jean François de Saint-Lambert (1716-1803) first served in the Lorraine Guards, and after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle,

ill-assorted, was never broken. M. de Jully, M. d'Épinay's brother, had also married; and, although at first unable to understand his wife's character, Madame d'Épinay subsequently became more intimate with her. We may also mention Madame de Maupeou, Madame d'Épinay's cousin, wife of the famous President,[1] a man of jealous and tyrannical character, who forbade his wife to speak or even to write to Madame d'Épinay, and took her away to live in seclusion on his estates, where she died. Another person whose name is frequently mentioned in the Memoirs

became attached to the court of King Stanislaus. He afterwards entered the service again, served in the Hanoverian campaign of 1756, then finally gave up the army and went to Paris, where he became acquainted with Duclos, Diderot, Rousseau, and Madame d'Houdetot. In 1769 he published a descriptive poem called "The Seasons," which secured the approbation of the philosophical clique, and gained him admission to the Academy; the poem seems to have been overrated. He also wrote *Poésies Fugitives*, *Le Matin et le Soir*, *Fables Orientales*, *Contes* (in prose), an *Essai sur la Vie et les Ouvrages d'Helvétius* (the materialist philosopher and author of the work called *de l'Esprit*), *Mémoires sur la Vie de Bolingbroke*, and the *Principes des Moeurs chez toutes les Nations, ou Catéchisme Universel*, his greatest work.

[1] René Nicolas Charles Augustin de Maupeou (1714-1792), son of René Charles de Maupeou, whom he succeeded (1763) in the office of President of the Parliament of Paris. In 1768 he became Chancellor of France, and in 1770 commenced a struggle against the Parliament. Having got rid of the Duc de Choiseul, the chief magistrate, he attempted a *coup d'état*. On the night of the 19th of January, 1771, the magistrates, who had suspended their functions, refused to resume them; they were exiled and deprived of office. A new Parliament was installed on the 24th, called the *Parlement Maupeou*, and composed of the members of the King's Council. The people showed violent hostility to this Parliament, and, on the accession of Louis XVI. (1774), the Chancellor was exiled and the former Parliament recalled.

is Gauffecourt, a Genevese watchmaker, who had secured, by his industry and efforts, a considerable fortune. Rousseau entertained the highest opinion of him. "M. de Gauffecourt was one of the most amiable men that ever existed; it was impossible to see him without affection, or to associate with him without becoming sincerely attached to him. In my life I never saw features more expressive of goodness and serenity, or that exhibited greater feeling, greater understanding, or inspired greater confidence. . . . Add to all his good qualities an affectionate heart, but loving rather too diffusely, and bestowing his favours with too little caution; serving his friends with zeal, or rather making himself the friend of everyone he could serve, yet contriving very dexterously to manage his own affairs, while warmly pursuing the interests of others." Madame d'Épinay calls him "a man of considerable intellect, very cheerful and amiable, although no longer young." Mademoiselle d'Ette's opinion was less favourable.

We next come to the best-known name of all, Jean Jacques Rousseau. At this time he had published nothing, and was entirely unknown. Francueil and his stepmother, Madame Dupin, who had given him some music to copy, seeing that there was something in him, had made him a kind of secretary. He had written a comedy in verse, which was performed at Épinay, where Francueil introduced the author. Madame d'Épinay's first impression of him will be found

in vol. i., page 176. The performance was most successful, Madame d'Épinay exhibiting a decided talent for acting, and being well supported by Madame d'Houdetot and Madame de Maupeou. At this time we find, in one of Mademoiselle d'Ette's letters, a hint as to the feelings entertained by Duclos towards Madame d'Épinay.

Duclos had recently made the acquaintance of the latter, and, being a man of strong will and impulses, had rapidly gained an ascendancy over a woman of such ingenuous character. At this time Duclos was about fifty years of age, and had made a reputation by his romance entitled the *Confessions du Comte de* ***. He was exceedingly abrupt, almost rude in manner, which he excused on the score of his natural bluntness, which would not allow him to use soft words. He was continually boasting of the uprightness of his intentions, and although he was much sought after in society, he was not generally trusted. He was at heart very vain, and a schemer. He wished to obtain complete control over Madame d'Épinay, and to play the part of her confidential adviser. The conversations which he had with her will amply show the extent of his pretensions in this respect.

Mademoiselle Quinault, a retired actress, also deserves notice. She was fond of the society of literary persons of note, and dinners were given twice a week, alternately at her house and at that of the Comte de Caylus, a distinguished Levantine traveller, and the author of several works on An-

tiquities. An account of two of these dinners is given in the Memoirs. On the second occasion, the views expressed greatly offended Rousseau, who, some days afterwards, had a discussion with Madame d'Épinay on religious matters, which ended with his relating a curious kind of apologue which throws considerable light upon his opinions on such subjects at the time.

In spite of her ill-health, and the engagements of society, Madame d'Épinay devoted great attention to the education of her children. She had decided views of her own on the subject, which she did her best to carry out. She gave her son and daughter a two hours' lesson in music and reading every morning. M. de Bellegarde's determination to send the boy to school greatly upset her; at the same time a tutor, one Linant, was procured for him. After the boy had been some little time at school, she went with Duclos to see him. The interview which took place, at which the tutor was also present, is very amusingly described.

M. de Bellegarde died in July, 1751, leaving a large fortune, of which the eldest son's share amounted to 1,700,000 livres; but he was heavily in debt, and his continued extravagances were bound to bring about a final crash. Soon afterwards we find Madame d'Épinay in great financial straits, writing to her husband for money to pay the servants' wages. About this time, also, she was overtaken by a further trouble in the shape of a growing coldness on the part of Francueil; and

the only consolation she gets from Mademoiselle d'Ette is, that "she will never be really happy until she is able to meet Francueil with pleasure, and to leave him without pain." At last Madame d'Épinay becomes jealous, and with good reason, for Francueil's attention was transferred to a Madame de Versel. Matters reached a climax when it was proposed to make up a party, in which Madame de Versel and Francueil were to be included, to pay a visit to Madame d'Houdetot in Normandy. Madame d'Epinay, unable to endure the idea of the two being together for a fortnight, actually proposes to her husband to accompany her and follow them, to which he consents. On their arrival, Francueil is greatly confused, and Madame de Versel is seen to be wearing a ring which had been refused to Madame d'Épinay when she asked Francueil to give it to her. After a conversation with Madame de Versel, in which she confesses that Francueil is deeply in love with her, Madame d'Épinay becomes disgusted with the world, and determines to retire to a convent.

She consults the Abbé Martin, her mother's spiritual adviser, on the point, and is dissuaded by him from carrying out her intention. He finally advises her not to break with Francueil, which he considers would be a "dishonourable folly," but, as long as she is obliged to meet him, to treat him just as she treats her other friends.

Francueil, on his part, did everything he could to smooth the way for a rupture. He formed a connection with an actress, the sister of M.

d'Epinay's mistress, and became the boon-companion of the husband. Duclos took care to inform Madame d'Épinay of all that was going on; the result was that she was very ill for some days. On her recovery, she had an explanation with Francueil; the consequence was that everything was over between them, and, when they subsequently met, it was merely as friends.

At this time Grimm[1] appears upon the scene.

[1] Friedrich-Melchior Grimm (1723-1807) came to France as tutor to the sons of Count Schönberg, Polish ambassador, and was afterwards reader to the hereditary Prince of Saxe-Gotha. He was introduced into literary circles by Rousseau, became secretary to the Comte de Frièse (Count Friesen), and afterwards to the Duc d'Orléans. He established his literary reputation by a witty pamphlet, entitled *Le petit Prophète de Boehmischbroda*, on the respective merits of French and Italian opera. In 1753 he was engaged by the Abbé Raynal to help him in conducting his literary correspondence with German sovereigns: with the aid of friends, he carried on the work until 1790, and it extended to six sovereigns, including the Empress of Russia, the King of Sweden, and the King of Poland. After the death of Count Friesen, Grimm obtained the patronage of the Duc d'Orléans, through whom he was appointed secretary to Marshal d'Estrées during the campaign of Westphalia in 1756-1757. He was subsequently appointed Minister of Saxe-Gotha at the court of France, with the title of Baron; he was subsequently deprived of that office for having criticized some French ministers too severely in a despatch. He was introduced to Catherine II. of Russia in 1773. After the Revolution, he retired to Gotha, and in 1792 emigrated to Russia, where he enjoyed high favour at Catherine's court. In 1795 he was appointed Russian Minister at Hamburg, and died at Gotha, Dec. 19th, 1807. Grimm's *Correspondance littéraire* is very valuable. His *Mémoire historique sur l'origine et les suites de mon attachement pour l'Impératrice Catherine II.* has been published in the Collection of the Russian Imperial Historical Society. A volume of *Correspondance inédite de Grimm et Diderot* was published at Paris in 1829.

At this time Grimm was about 30 years old. He had been introduced to Madame d'Epinay by Rousseau, who was then his most enthusiastic admirer. Grimm was tall, but awkwardly built. He was shy and naturally indolent, and, although cheerful with his friends, very reserved with strangers. A certain amount of coldness had given him the reputation of being masterful and despotic; hence the name of *Tyran le Blanc*, which was given to him by Gauffecourt, the epithet referring to his habit of daubing his cheeks with white lead. Madame d'Épinay has given, in the Memoirs, an excellent "character sketch" of him.

About this time a disagreeable incident occurred, which led to a greater intimacy between Grimm and Madame d'Épinay. Madame de Jully (her sister-in-law) was attacked by small-pox, and died after four days' illness. On the day of her death she gave Madame d'Épinay a key, to which it was evident that she attached considerable importance. Madame d'Épinay did not at first know what she was expected to do with the key, but at last came to the conclusion that Madame de Jully had wished her to destroy some compromising papers. In fact, she found that the key was the key of the writing-desk in which she had seen Madame de Jully lock up the letters she received from the Chevalier de V***, the successor in her affections to the opera-singer Jelyotte. She took out all the papers she found in the desk, threw them into the fire, and

handed the key to M. de Jully. The subsequent results of her action were destined to prove very distressing to her. M. d'Épinay owed 50,000 crowns to M. de Jully, and the document relating to it could not be found. It so happened that a maid had seen Madame d'Épinay enter the room where the desk was, and had noticed that the fireplace was full of burnt paper. Madame d'Épinay, feeling bound to protect the memory of her dead friend, could not disclose the nature of the papers which she had burnt, and it was consequently assumed that the missing document had been one of them, and that she had intentionally destroyed it. The affair made a great stir in Paris, and Madame d'Épinay found herself everywhere regarded with suspicion. Her only defender was Grimm, who fought a duel with a certain Baron d'E * * *, who, at a dinner, accused Madame d'Épinay of deliberate treachery. Shortly afterwards, the paper which had been the cause of so much discussion was found in the possession of Madame de Jully's man of business. Madame d'Épinay's character was thus completely cleared, and the only person who was not thoroughly comfortable was M. de Jully, who could not make out what the papers were which his late wife had been so anxious to destroy. Grimm, on calling upon Madame d'Épinay after his recovery from his wound, was received with the greatest cordiality, and from this time may be dated the intimacy which was destined to ripen into a still stronger feeling—at least, on the woman's side.

Madame d'Epinay imagined that she had finally got rid of Francueil; but, the moment she began to exhibit her independence, he became offended. When, later on, he became convinced that her heart was occupied with another, and that other Grimm, he grew jealous, burst into tears, flung himself at Madame d'Épinay's feet, and begged her to comfort him. Unable to forget the terms on which they had formerly been, she allowed him to continue to visit her, while he, on his part, made her promise that she would, as far as possible, spare him the unpleasantness of seeing Grimm. However, in spite of all her precautions, she was unable to prevent the rivals one day meeting at her house. Grimm, disapproving of the pity which she allowed herself to lavish upon Francueil, did his utmost to induce her to get rid of him definitely, declaring that her treatment only made matters worse. His advice was delivered coldly, in a tone which "chilled" Madame d'Épinay.

Although she saw that it was necessary to break off with Francueil, she was afraid of a scandal, and was alarmed at the idea of a possible duel between the two rivals. She accordingly wrote to Francueil, begging him not to visit her any more until he had recovered his senses. The result was that he returned her likeness and letters, and bade her good-bye for ever. In spite of this, she was unable to help reproaching Grimm for the harsh manner in which he had advised her to treat Francueil, and declared that

the latter's despair had made her perfectly miserable. However, subsequent accounts of Francueil showed her sympathy to have been misplaced.

The connection with Grimm opens up a fresh period in Madame d'Épinay's life. Grimm was rather a Mentor than a lover to Madame d'Épinay, who delighted to follow the guidance of a stronger will than her own. On the death of the Comte de Friese, Grimm was taken up by the Duc d'Orléans, who secured for him the post of secretary to Marshal d'Estrées, in 1757, at the commencement of the Seven Years' War; when the Marshal set out for Westphalia, he took Grimm with him. Madame d'Épinay was naturally deeply grieved. The letters to and from Grimm which are found in the Memoirs show the feelings with which the two regarded each other, and contain several interesting sketches and anecdotes concerning persons of their acquaintance.

We now turn to Madame d'Épinay's relations with Rousseau. The latter was on the point of returning to Geneva, where he had been offered a post as librarian, when Madame d'Épinay persuaded him not to do so by offering him the Hermitage to live in. The Hermitage was a small house, at the entrance of the Forest of Montmorency, which belonged to M. d'Épinay. Madame d'Épinay had it furnished, and wrote to Rousseau placing it at his disposal. After some pressing, he agreed to go and live there. "Here arose the incomprehensible triangular quarrel be-

tween Diderot, Rousseau, and Grimm, which ended Rousseau's sojourn at the Hermitage," of which such opposite accounts are given in the *Confessions* and Madame d'Épinay's *Memoirs*. "The supposition least favourable to Rousseau is that it was due to one of his numerous fits of half-insane petulance and indignation at the obligations which he was nevertheless always ready to incur. That most favourable to him is that he was expected to lend himself in a more or less complaisant manner to assist and cover Madame d'Épinay's adulterous affection for Grimm. It need only be said that Madame d'Épinay's morals and Rousseau's temper are equally indefensible, but that the evidence as to the exact influence of both on this particular transaction is hopelessly inconclusive. Diderot seems to have been guilty of nothing but thoughtlessness in lending himself to a scheme of the Le Vasseurs, mother and daughter, for getting Rousseau out of the solitude of the Hermitage."[1] What led to the final rupture between them was Rousseau's refusal to accompany Madame d'Épinay to Geneva. Her health had long been very bad, and she had at length been persuaded by her friends to go to Geneva to consult Tronchin, who had stayed in Paris, and acquired a great reputation.

She had written to this famous physician, who replied that he could not possibly undertake to advise her without seeing her, and she had at length

[1] J. Morley, *Rousseau*.

yielded to the persistent entreaties of De Jully, Grimm, and her friends, and decided to go. Considering Rousseau's frequently expressed wish to revisit his native city, it might have been expected that he would have hailed with delight the opportunity of doing so, and, as Saint-Lambert was in Paris, he doubtless had good reasons for wanting Rousseau out of the way of Madame d'Houdetot. The story of Rousseau's reception of the suggestion that he should accompany Madame d'Épinay is given at full length in the *Confessions* and the *Memoirs*.

One cannot help thinking that, however distasteful the journey might have been to him, Rousseau ought, at least, to have offered to undertake it, even if he believed the story of the reason which had induced Madame d'Épinay to go to Geneva; and his letters to Grimm do not place his conduct in a more favourable light, if we except his excuses on the score of ill-health. It is impossible to pardon his cowardice and unmanliness. After having enjoyed all the benefits which a sincere friendship had heaped upon him, he turns round and rends his benefactress; and, even then, he had not sufficient self-respect to leave the Hermitage at once. After Madame d'Epinay's departure for Geneva, they never met again. In the winter of 1770-1771 Rousseau suddenly reappeared in Paris, reading parts of his *Confessions* from house to house; and at last, Madame d'Épinay, irritated beyond endurance, appealed to the chief of police, who prohibited the reading.

Madame d'Épinay's stay at Geneva may be said to have divided her life into two halves, and was the turning point in her character. Whereas she had formerly been frivolous, too apt to submit to the authority of others without due reflection, and given to rapidly changing her likes and inclinations, she became serious, difficult to convince, and constant in her friendships. She left Paris on the 30th of October, 1757, and returned on the 9th of October, 1759.

Voltaire spent the winter of 1757-8 at Lausanne, and frequently invited Tronchin and his patient to his house. His passion for theatrical performances was only further inflamed by the ban laid upon such exhibitions by the Genevese Ministers, while Rousseau's *Lettre sur les Spectacles*, against the erection of a theatre at Geneva, had also roused him exceedingly. He at last gained the day, and people flocked to the theatre at Mont-Repos. He had such a passion for the parts he had to play that, in the morning, he used to dress like an Arab or a Greek, according to the part he was going to take in the evening, and walk about his garden, to the amazement of his servants. In the company of Voltaire and other congenial society Madame d'Épinay lived happily, and her health improved considerably. Her only sorrow was her separation from Grimm. It is doubtful whether the feelings of the latter towards her ever amounted to a serious passion; his was not an enthusiastic nature; he was her true and sincere friend and prudent counsellor to

the day of her death, but by no means a sentimental lover. Madame d'Épinay cherished the hope that, with the least possible delay, as soon as he could do so without offending against the proprieties, he would follow her to Geneva. Grimm, however, kept deferring his visit, on the plea that he was obliged to remain and help Diderot to revise the proofs of a work on which he was engaged; probably, also, he had grown rather lukewarm. It was not until most alarming reports concerning her health arrived from Geneva that Grimm felt he could not defer his visit any longer, and he set out, travelling night and day to reach his destination. His arrival exercised a most beneficial effect upon the patient's health, and even the arrival of Mademoiselle Fel, an actress for whom Grimm had formerly entertained a most violent passion,[1] failed to disturb her happiness.

At length, after a stay of nearly two years, she left Geneva, accompanied by Grimm and De Jully, and Voltaire gave a farewell dinner to the departing visitors. A few miles before they arrived at Paris, they were met by M. d'Épinay, who, although his debts had increased, and his income had been largely diminished by reforms introduced in regard to the management of the "farms," still carried on his career of extravagance unchecked. He and Francueil still lived with the Verrière girls, and his mania for building still continued. At times he had fits of economy, when hard pressed by his creditors, but soon took to his old courses again.

[1] See Rousseau, *Confessions*.

One of Madame d'Épinay's first visitors in Paris was Diderot,[1] whose prejudices had been overcome by Grimm, by whom, after a meeting in the house of Baron d'Holbach, he permitted himself to be presented to Madame d'Épinay and her mother. He immediately inspired her with a feeling of confidence, and won his way to her heart by his respectful behaviour towards her mother, and the interest he took in her son and daughter. It is curious to notice the totally different light in which she views the man who had formerly been ready to believe all that was bad of her, mainly through the malignant influence of Duclos and Rousseau. She writes to her guardian: "Since that evening he has been to see me every day, and has made me lose a good deal of time, if moments so well employed can be thus spoken of. His conversation is delightful; he has filled my head and heart with a feeling of exaltation. It is not exactly he that makes me happy, but he has given an impulse to my soul which has rendered me capable of enjoying all the happiness and blessings by which I am surrounded. M. Grimm is delighted."

In the autumn of 1760 Diderot lived as Madame d'Épinay's guest for some weeks at La Chevrette. While there he met with a slight accident, which prevented him from walking. On this occasion he and Madame d'Épinay had their portraits painted, and, in a letter to Mademoiselle

[1] The well-known representative of the Encyclopaedists. See John Morley, *Diderot and the Encyclopaedists* (London, 1878).

Volland, he gives a charming picture of his hostess. On the 3rd of September she went to see Voltaire's *Tancrède* performed in Paris; she had previously been present at a representation of it before leaving Geneva. Two days afterwards, accompanied by Grimm, she returned to La Chevrette, where they were joined by Diderot. Here the days went peacefully by. Diderot thus describes the manner of life at La Chevrette: "In the morning, he" [Grimm] "is alone in his room, working; she is alone in her room, dreaming of him; I am alone in my room, writing to you.[1] We meet for a moment before dinner; we dine; after dinner, we play chess; after chess, a walk; after the walk, retire to our rooms; after retirement, conversation; after conversation, supper; after supper, a little more conversation; and so ends an innocent and delightful day, in which we have amused and occupied ourselves, thought, gained information, and learned to estèem and love each other." A few days after Diderot's arrival, a kind of harvest-home rejoicing and fair took place. There was music and dancing, in which richly-dressed ladies from Paris mingled freely with the daughters of the peasantry.

Diderot's intimacy with Madame d'Epinay, and his long stay at La Chevrette, caused heart-burnings at Grandval, the estate of the Baron d'Holbach and his wife. It was currently reported that he was in love with Madame d'Épinay, and that he was endeavouring to detach her from

[1] Mademoiselle Volland.

Grimm. When he at last arrived, he was greeted with the enquiry whether he had stolen the affections of his friend's mistress. Diderot took no notice of this, being well aware of Madame d'Épinay's devotion to Grimm; although, as he hints in a letter to Mademoiselle Volland, he had his doubts as to its being reciprocated with equal warmth. At Grandval we again come across Madame d'Épinay's perfidious friend, Mademoiselle d'Ette. She had not been very prosperous since her rupture with the Chevalier de Valory, and her ill-fortune did not appear to have improved her temper. She had indulged in such violent abuse of Madame d'Épinay that M. d'Affry had felt compelled to call upon her, and tell her that she must hold her tongue. Diderot, mentioning her arrival at Grandval, speaks of her as one "who had once been as beautiful as an angel, but to whom nothing now was left but the spirit of a devil." Her stay was only of short duration.

At the commencement of 1763, Madame d'Épinay's position underwent a material change, from a financial point of view. Her husband's name was struck off the list of "farmers-general." In spite of numerous warnings that had been addressed to him, he had never anticipated any serious results. He continued his career of extravagance until his debts amounted to 700,000 francs. The day he was informed of his removal from the list, he raved like a madman, and hastened to his wife, unable to do anything but groan and shed tears. Madame d'Épinay, who had

long anticipated the blow, received the news quietly; and her aged mother courageously said that, "if she could hope that it would reform M. d'Épinay, she would gladly give up the little fortune that still remained to her."

As soon as the event became known, a family council was held, at which Madame d'Epinay declared her intention of going to live in a small house in the Faubourg de Monceau, and, in spite of her husband's opposition, being supported by M. d'Affry and M. de Jully, she retired thither with her mother and her daughter Pauline, while her son was sent to his uncle, who had offered to take charge of him until it was settled what was to be done with him. No sooner was she settled in her modest abode, than she was rejoined by Grimm, who went to live in the neighbourhood.

She soon became accustomed to her new life, and lived happily in her retirement. In addition to Grimm, she had as visitors Diderot, De Jully, the Baron d'Holbach and his wife, and her old lover, Francueil, and kept up a correspondence with her friends at Geneva. She has described her peaceful existence in a number of letters to M. d'Affry.

Finding her small house in many respects inconvenient, she decided to leave Paris in the summer and go and live in the country. The alterations at La Briche not being completed, she decided to take up her quarters temporarily at La Chevrette, for which a tenant had not yet been found. Here she was rejoined by Grimm,

who, having been obliged to resign his diplomatic functions, was occupied exclusively with the famous *Correspondance Littéraire*, in which she materially assisted him. This work had been commenced in 1747 by the Abbé Raynal, and was a kind of literary and scientific newspaper, in which all the new books, discoveries, theatrical representations, and society events which attracted attention in Paris were discussed. Some German princes were the first subscribers. Under the editorship of Grimm, the quality of the work greatly improved. He carried it on from 1753-1790. His chief helpers were Diderot, Voltaire, Galiani, Heinrich Meister, and Madame d'Épinay, and the number of subscribers largely increased.

La Chevrette having been sold, and the alterations at La Briche completed, Madame d'Épinay took up her quarters there. La Briche was a small house in the neighbourhood of the château, all the surroundings of which, the waters, gardens, and park, had a wild and uncultivated appearance. Here, although Madame d'Épinay's means did not permit her to offer much hospitality, she was surrounded by a circle of friends ; her malady had not yet shown itself in a dangerous aspect, and from time to time she enjoyed good health. The chief amusements at La Briche were the performance of comedies and the acting of charades.

Madame d'Épinay rarely saw her husband, except on such occasions as the death of her mother, which took place in November, 1762, and the marriage of her daughter Pauline, at fifteen

years of age, to the Vicomte Dominique de Belsunce, who belonged to one of the most ancient families of Navarre. The marriage was celebrated on the 10th of March, 1764, and, in spite of the disparity of age (the Vicomte being forty years old), turned out a happy one.

Pauline had never given her mother any cause for anxiety, but this was far from being the case with young Louis d'Épinay. He was now in his eighteenth year; the effects of the good examples which he had had before him during his stay at Geneva had worn off, and he already showed signs of following in his father's footsteps, and an inclination to plunge into the dissipations of Paris. He inherited not only the frivolous nature, but also the amiability and musical talents of his father. In spite of his faults, he was always a great favourite with his mother, and he never seemed to lack friends or credit. Madame d'Épinay's first idea was to bring him up to a commercial life. Through the influence of Grimm, he was sent to Bordeaux, to the house of a rich merchant named Bethmann; but he found the life totally unsuited to him. At last M. Bethmann declared that he could not possibly keep him any longer, and the young man returned to Paris, with the intention of studying law. In the year 1767 we find him at Pau, where he had obtained the office of *Conseiller au Parlement*. Pau had been chosen because of the great influence of M. de Belsunce in the neighbourhood. But his position did not exercise any restraining influence upon

Louis; he gambled, and got deeply into debt, and was obliged to resign his office. At last his father resolved upon a very extreme measure: he obtained a *lettre de cachet*, and Louis was imprisoned in Bordeaux for nearly two years; in September, 1771, he returned to Paris, and obtained a commission as Lieutenant in the Musketeers.

After 1770, Madame d'Épinay gradually retired from Parisian life. Her illness assumed an alarming aspect: Tronchin, who was living in Paris as physician-in-ordinary to the Duc d'Orléans, was unremitting in his attentions to her. Sometimes she spent months in bed or on a couch. Voltaire, who was unable to visit her on account of her illness, wrote consolingly to her. At this time she took opium in order to alleviate her sufferings, which alarmed her daughter exceedingly.

What added to her distress was the serious illness of Grimm, who was suddenly attacked by cholera in May, 1772. When he and Diderot went on their famous journey to St. Petersburg, she was hovering between life and death. Grimm did not return to Paris to stay until 1777.

Meanwhile, M. d'Épinay continued his career of extravagance; his son, who had been obliged to leave the Musketeers in consequence of his debts, entered M. de Schomberg's regiment of dragoons, which was in garrison at Nancy, and left Paris with abundant protestations of reform for the future. He was again obliged to leave the service, and sent to Berne, where we find him in November, 1773, at the house of one M. Wilhelmly. After a stay

of two years in Berne, he went to Fribourg, with letters of introduction to the Boccard family. M. de Boccard was a Knight of Saint-Louis, and had formerly been a lieutenant in the regiment of the Swiss guards in the service of France. Young d'Épinay was favourably received, and so ingratiated himself with the family that, when he gained the affections of the youngest daughter, M. de Boccard readily gave his consent to the marriage. Although it cannot be said to have offered very brilliant financial inducements, it at least gave Louis a chance of settling down quietly. The married couple were obliged to live at Fribourg, during the first seven years of their marriage, in the house of M. Boccard, who provided them with furniture and all necessaries. On the occasion of his marriage, Louis' *interdiction*[1] was foolishly removed, and the result was that he ran up debts to the amount of 80,000 francs, and was threatened by his creditors. M. de Boccard was scandalised, and demanded the *interdiction* of his son-in-law, as the only means of saving him. The latter offered no resistance, and immediately drew up a list of his debts to be submitted to his family. Madame d'Épinay, who loved her son in spite of all his faults, was at her wits' end to know what to do to assist him to satisfy his creditors, and at last decided to sell her diamonds, which the Empress Catherine, at the request of Grimm, who behaved with great delicacy in the matter, bought for a handsome sum.

[1] The deprivation of the right to manage his affairs.

The father's position, meanwhile, had become even more desperate than his son's. In 1777 his debts amounted to 650,000 francs. One of the Verrières had died in 1775, but he still continued his *liaison* with the other. On Sept. 18th, 1777, he was put under *interdiction*, and from this time all intercourse between the husband and wife ceased. He died on Feb. 15th, 1782, and thus one of the partners in this ill-assorted marriage left the scene in which he had played so discreditable a part.

Madame d'Épinay's own financial position grew worse. Already, in 1771, when the Abbé Terray become finance-minister, she had written to the Abbé Galiani that she was ruined. But at that time the proposed fiscal measures against the "farmers-general" had only been threatened, but not carried into effect; it was Necker who, in 1780, suppressed all the *bénéfices* on the "farms," and ruined many, Madame d'Épinay among the number. Her chief consolation was the education of her little granddaughter Émilie, her conversations with whom formed the subject of a book called *Les Conversations d'Émilie*, consisting of dialogues between a mother and child, and comprising the principles of elementary education up to the age of ten years. In spite of the ridicule with which the Abbé Galiani received it, the work was awarded the Monthyon prize[1] by the French Academy. Other works from Madame d'Épinay's pen will be found mentioned in the *Bibliography*.

[1] One of several prizes founded by Monthyon (or Montyon), a distinguished philanthropist.

We are now approaching the end of Madame d'Épinay's career. She had been fortunate enough to see Voltaire for the last time in the spring of 1778; he died on the 30th of May, followed by Rousseau on the 2nd of July in the same year. Madame d'Épinay wrote the following epitaph on her implacable enemy, which was placed over the gate of the Hermitage: "O Rousseau, whose passionate writings were created in this simple Hermitage, Rousseau, gifted with greater eloquence than prudence, why did you leave my neighbourhood? You yourself had chosen my peaceful retreat, which offered you happiness, and you despised it; you were ungrateful, and made my heart bleed; but why recall these memories to a heart so sensitive as mine? I see you, I read you, and all is forgiven." During her last illness, Grimm tenderly watched over her; and, on the 17th of April, 1783, she died, surrounded by Grimm, M. and Madame de Belsunce, her granddaughter Émilie, Madame d'Houdetot, and Madame de la Live, De Jully's widow, who were with her at the last.

Such was the end of Madame d'Épinay. Considering the manners of the times in which she lived, she must not be judged too harshly. She was a faithful friend, an affectionate and devoted mother and daughter, and would doubtless have been an equally faithful wife, had not her husband's conduct completely alienated her affections from him.

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# MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

# MADAME D'ÉPINAY

## CHAPTER I

(1735-1746)

M. Tardieu d'Esclavelles, a brigadier of infantry, had just died in the King's service, during the campaign of 1735. He bequeathed to his widow, as her sole fortune, the prospect of an income barely sufficient to bring up their only daughter, at that time ten years of age. Being the eldest friend of the family, I was appointed guardian to little Emilie.[1]

An aunt of M. d'Esclavelles, Madame de Roncherolles, whose misfortunes had obliged her to take up her abode in a convent at Paris, took my ward with her during the absence of her mother, who set out for her husband's native place to collect the remnants of a patrimony,

[1] Her proper name was Louise-Florence-Pétronille. Her real guardian was her uncle, André Prouveur, but, as he lived at Condé, and was prevented by his duties from residing in Paris, a co-guardian was appointed, M. d'Affry, who appears in the *Mémoires* under the name of M. de Lisieux.

the greater part of which had been expended in the service.

Madame de Roncherolles' retirement was shared by her grand-daughter, who, like her grandmother, had suffered by her mother's second marriage. Madame de Roncherolles was of opinion that it was better for young women of rank to be uncomfortable in a convent than with those who took them in out of charity. It was in this refuge from misfortune that Mademoiselle de Roncherolles and my ward formed that intimacy, the memory of which has been preserved by Emilie in her Memoirs.

Mademoiselle de Roncherolles was of a lively, cheerful, and very determined character; Emilie, on the contrary, was thoughtful and extremely sensitive: she exhibited equal frankness and intellectual capacity. She remained nearly three years in the convent, and during that time nothing of special importance occurred as far as she was concerned. The only thing was that she became very devout, and the difference between Madame de Roncherolles' principles and those of Madame d'Esclavelles filled her mind with troublesome doubts.

The ruling principle of all Madame d'Esclavelles' actions was the dread of censure, and she unceasingly endeavoured to inspire her daughter with the same feeling, which, in her case, amounted to weakness. Madame de Roncherolles, on the contrary, with greater firmness, considered it sufficient to impress upon Emilie's

heart the principles which lead to the practice of good and the avoidance of evil. "Then," said she, "false judgments will matter little." But Madame d'Esclavelles had so great an affection for her daughter, that she was always afraid that others might not look upon her with the same eyes as herself, and, in her persistent attempts to anticipate everything, she frequently went beyond the evil which she feared. Her daughter, on her part, frequently pretended to be of her opinion, to avoid distressing her, or else followed her blindly, thinking that her mother could not possibly make a mistake.

Such was my ward's frame of mind when she went to live with her mother in the house of M. la Live de Bellegarde, a farmer-general.[1] Madame de Bellegarde was Madame d'Esclavelles' sister. She had three sons and two daughters, one three years old, the other five years younger than Emilie.[2]

Although she was not really pretty, Mademoiselle d'Esclavelles' features were at once noble and intellectual; her eyes were the picture of her inmost thoughts, and the spirit of devotion, which at that time held complete sway over

[1] The *fermiers-généraux*, or farmers-general, was the name given, under the *ancien régime*, to persons who secured, by payment of a fixed sum of money, the right to collect certain of the public taxes. An association of forty, afterwards sixty, farmers-general, called *ferme générale*, was formed in 1720, which secured from the government, by a yearly payment of 55,000,000 livres, the working of the rights of consumable commodities. The system was abolished in 1790.

[2] Afterwards the Comtesse d'Houdetot.

her, gave an air of sadness to her whole person, which rendered her still more interesting.

It was almost unavoidable that the society of his cousin should arouse in M. d'Épinay, the eldest of M. de Bellegarde's sons, who was finishing his studies, a feeling against which even an older man would have found it difficult to protect himself.

M. de Bellegarde believed that, by sending his son away on duties connected with his appointment, he could check, in its first beginnings, the progress of an attachment which inequality of fortune made it, in the eyes of Madame de Bellegarde, a duty to oppose, while Madame de Roncherolles could not imagine that the marriage of her niece to anyone but a person of rank was even to be thought of. In pursuance of an old idea of hers, she said, "If M. and Madame de Bellegarde are at all capable of noble sentiments, why not propose to them to put their son into the army, and then make him marry Mademoiselle d'Esclavelles, on condition that he takes her arms and her name?" Soon after the death of Madame de Bellegarde, who had been the most insurmountable obstacle to this marriage, her husband, a worthy but weak-minded man, consented to reward an attachment which, on his son's part, was perhaps rather an infatuation than a genuine passion. Emilie was then twenty years of age.

I had been obliged to leave Paris on business. My ward wrote to me, when the marriage was

quite decided upon, to hasten my return. I arrived on the day appointed for signing the contract, which she spent in tears; and when she had to sign, the pen fell from her hands.

M. de Bellegarde gave his son 300,000 livres,[1] and about 2,000 livres' worth of diamonds to his daughter-in-law. Clearly, his generosity did not ruin him.

I myself handed in a statement of my accounts, and on the next day I received the following letter from Madame d'Épinay:

What can you think of me, of my running away yesterday evening, of my silence? Will you infer from it, my dear guardian, that I am ungrateful? You could never be so unjust. Believe me when I say that I appreciate, as I ought, the manner in which you have been kind enough to look after my interests since my father's death. I wanted to thank you for it yesterday, but my heart was so full that I could not utter a single word. I could not feel satisfied with the kind of farewell which you bade us when you handed over my papers to my father-in-law. The gentle courtesy which you showed in this last act of your guardianship drew tears from my eyes. I hope you saw them. I left the room for a moment to recover myself, that I might be able to express all my appreciation and gratitude; and when I came back, you

[1] The value of the livre, now replaced by the franc, varied according to time and place.

were gone. I felt very uneasy for the rest of the evening. If I had been certain that you had not misunderstood my silence, I should have been calmer. My dear guardian, always be your ward's friend and adviser; never refuse to give her your opinion on any subject. Reassure her without delay; let her hear that your friendship is equal to her gratitude; in other words, that it has no limits and will last for ever.

*Letter from* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* MADAME LA PRÉSIDENTE DE MAUPEOU.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—How angry I am with your mother for not having married you to the man who adored you! What delightful happiness it is, to be the beloved wife of a husband whom one loves and for whom one has suffered! I cannot yet believe in my happiness. Some time ago you pitied me, thinking that I should be bored to death in my father-in-law's house when I once began to mix in society. Ah, my cousin! how mistaken you were. My only disagreeable moments since my marriage have been those which have been spent in receiving or returning visits. What a happy lot is mine! will my heart ever be able to endure so much happiness? There are moments when it cannot bear with all the emotions by which it is agitated. Is there a son more respectful, more tender than M. d'Épinay, a husband more—— Ah, cousin! epithets fail me, and then, what am I to say to you? There are a thousand things which I

cannot express, but which I feel distinctly. I wanted to give you an account of the way in which M. d'Épinay proposes that we shall spend our lives. He intends, when his circuit is over, to economise at first during the six years for which he is going to travel, and then, if we are in a position to set up an establishment of our own, to settle down in it. We shall dine with our parents twice a week. We shall have two suppers and one dinner a week. He intends to have a dinner independently of the two suppers, because it is the meal that I prefer. How good he is! Ought I not to lead the life which suits him best? I told him, but it made no difference; he insists upon the dinner. Afterwards we shall have a concert, to which all our friends will be able to come, and on two other days we shall only have a few musicians to amuse us by ourselves. There now! I nearly forgot the very thing about which I meant to write to you: I intend to come and dine with you to-morrow with my husband, if you are at home. Send me a few lines in reply. Good-bye; I have finished very quickly, although I have still a thousand things to tell you; but we are going to dinner, and I have not nearly finished dressing.

*From the Same to the Same.*

Ah, cousin, I spent a delightful day yesterday! We were to go and call upon Madame de Ternan. My mother was very unwell in the morning with a sore throat; this made me uneasy, and, after a

short struggle between my desire to go out and my duty, I persuaded my husband to make my excuses to Madame de Ternan. I told him that I had made up my mind to remain with my mother. I felt very much inclined to propose to him to stay as well, for more reasons than one, as you can guess; but I was even more anxious that the suggestion should come from him. It was on the tip of my tongue to represent to him that he ought at least to propose to my mother to stay with her; but we had been talking, I should think, for fully ten minutes about other things before he offered to stay with me. Perhaps I ought not to have accepted his offer at once; however, I did, and thanked him heartily for his kindness. We stayed in my mother's room till three o'clock. She did not appreciate this attention on his part as much as she ought to have done. Of course I know that he only did his duty, but how few do what they ought! and then, it seems to me that actions deserve more or less appreciation according to the character of those who perform them. When a young man who is very fond of the gaieties and pleasures of society voluntarily sacrifices them to duty without being absolutely obliged to do so, simply in order to show respect and attention, does he not deserve as much esteem for what he does, when he renders an essential service, as a very serious person, who is devoted to his principles?

The great fault of men in general is, I think, that they never put themselves in the place of

those upon whom they pass judgment. This, I believe, is the case with my mother. She has perhaps never been unfairly judged, which makes her very, nay, far too severe upon my husband, and if I did not often take his part against her, I do not know what would be the result of it. You can guess how painful it is to me to side against my mother. I wish I could make my husband show a little more confidence in her, and induce him to ask her to manage his affairs, for I suspect that he does not understand much about them, and that they are not in too good order.

After dinner, at three o'clock, we went up again to our room, and my husband suggested that we should not receive any visitors, on the plea that my mother was ill; on this condition, he said that he would not go out at all that day. I asked for nothing better; in fact, I was delighted; but I should never have made the proposal myself. As we were safe from interruption, we at first had some music; then he talked to me about the theatres where he often goes, and where he would like me to go. We tried to think how we could manage it without shocking my mother; his idea was that I should take the responsibility of going upon myself and appeal to custom, without regard for my mother's displeasure, which he thinks is unreasonable, and consequently does not deserve to be given way to. There is a principle for you, cousin! I think you told me that he had none. It is true that it seems misapplied, because we are neither of us

capable as yet of passing judgment upon our fathers and mothers. However, he is more capable of it than I am, and I think that it was very creditable on my part not to give way to him; for, without taking into account that he supported his arguments by plausible appeals to precedent and custom, I had to contend against his ascendency over me, my desire to go with him, so as not to lose sight of him, and, I must confess, a certain amount of shame at not doing like all the other women I see. At last I promised to talk to my mother and try and obtain her consent. I do not know how to set about it. I should have many things to tell her in which I am far more concerned; for instance, the bitterness with which she always speaks to my husband, and her prejudice against him, which always makes her contradict him. But I dare not make the attempt; for, if she should be offended at my remonstrances, she would perhaps become prejudiced against me as well, and then I should no longer have any influence to exert in his favour when the opportunity occurred.

I must therefore deal cautiously with my uncle and my mother, and never interfere or try to control them. As for my uncle, whom I want to get used to calling father, as is only right, after all that he has done for me—my father, then, is entirely free from prejudices; he is fairly just, he cannot be said to attach importance to anything. I do not yet feel sure whether this is due to indifference, indolence, or a philosophical turn of mind: in any

case, I pity him. We lose many pleasures when we carry too far—how shall I express it?—that sleepiness of mind, that apparent indifference to all that goes on around us. You would often be inclined to say that he sees and hears nothing, and when he wishes to show his gratitude or kindness, he nods his head and smiles feebly, with an air of satisfaction playing lightly over his features. It is easy to see that he is capable of feeling; but it only shows itself, as it were, through a veil which you would think he has not strength enough to tear off: it is hard to guess whether he is pleased with you or not. He speaks so little, and scarcely seems to be listening; and yet nothing escapes his notice. He easily forgets words, because he is very absent-minded; but the impression produced by things is never obliterated from his mind. He is rarely angry, and, when he is obliged to scold, it is easy to see that he is out of his element, for it is always clumsily done. It is a continual study for me to try how to please him. If I needed to be encouraged in it, I should be greatly to be pitied; but the mere idea of sometimes being able to assist my husband is quite enough to prevent me from ever becoming tired of my task.

We spent the evening as delightfully as the day: my husband thought the time had passed very quickly. I have never seen him so amiable. We were very gay at supper, and, in short, we succeeded in making my mother and father-in-law laugh. De Jully, my brother-in-law, rallied

me upon my liveliness, and at first made me feel as uncomfortable as if I had not been married. My mother, it is true, looked at me from time to time with a certain air of severity, while we were talking about the delightful day we had spent; is it, then, a crime, an indelicacy, to love one's husband fondly? I am sometimes afraid to utter this name, so honourable and so dear, in her presence; what a restraint that is, cousin! I am terribly afraid that I shall lose my patience at last. They are calling for me; good-bye. Good heavens! I have been writing to you for two whole hours.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE LISIEUX.

MY DEAR GUARDIAN,—I am giving a fancy-dress ball on Thursday, with my parents' consent. You must not fail to come. I am delighted; it will be charming. Madame de Maupeou and myself are going to be shepherdesses. If you could only see my dress! Come, dear guardian. I have no time to tell you any more about it; only come. Seriously, we cannot do without you. By the bye, this morning, before my mother, I said, *I will*. Fancy that! It was not very successful; I believe it was because she saw that I was trembling all over when I said it. But I will tell you all about it when I see you.

*From the Same to the Same.*

MY DEAR, DEAR GUARDIAN! — O heavens! my husband is angry with me! It is useless

for me to think about it. I am not in the wrong; at least, I do not think so. My mother, who is always against him, takes his part this time. Oh! I cannot understand it. I should much like to give you an account of what has taken place; but since you must decide between us, would not that be trying to prejudice you in my favour? No, no, dear guardian, for I only ask you to reconcile us. I am willing that you should find me wrong, if I am—but only a little; for if you were to condemn me outright, perhaps my husband would not listen to me at all another time.

You know that, during the last fortnight, he has often supped from home; but you do *not* know that he returns very late, and retires to his own little room. As this is next to mine, and I cannot go to sleep until I have heard him come in, I cannot be mistaken about it. Hitherto I have never ventured to reproach him seriously, however vexed I may have felt.

On Sunday, hearing a noise in his room, I thought he was unwell; this was enough to make me go in. I found him suffering from a severe attack of indigestion. I remained with him for the rest of the night, and at four o'clock sent for the doctor, who prescribed some medicine which afforded him relief, and he afterwards went to sleep for several hours. When he woke up, I asked him quietly where he had been to supper the night before. "At the Chevalier de Canaple's," he answered; "why do you want

to know?" "Because I am inclined to hate all who are the cause of your health being upset." He smiled and thanked me. This Chevalier, dear guardian, is the person who accompanied Madame de Maupeou to our ball, and showed such marked attention to me.

This encouraged me to tell him that I was very much afraid that he was not as careful about his health as he was grateful for the interest which I took in it, and that this was inconsistent. "What makes you afraid of this?" he asked. "Because for some time past you have gone to bed very late." "How do you know that? Have you by chance been watching me? I tell you plainly that that doesn't suit me at all." "Do you call it watching, to sit up for you every night in vain till past one o'clock in the morning?" "You are certainly choosing your time well to reproach me when I really do not deserve it," said M. d'Épinay; "I excuse you this time, but please do not take that tone. I desire to be free, and I do not like to be questioned." M. l'Abbé de Givry and M. de Rinville came in as he was speaking. After we had interchanged compliments, I went out and retired to my room, feeling grieved and humiliated—and by my husband! I heard that, at six o'clock, although the doctor had forbidden him to go out, he ordered his carriage to be got ready. I thought he was coming up to me. Nothing of the kind. He kept his visitors, although they wanted to go: then I lost all hope of seeing him, or, at least,

of speaking to him. I did not feel sure whether I ought not to refuse to admit him, in case he came up with them. Ah, my dear guardian! when I heard the carriage leave, I thought I should faint; I was out of my senses. At eight o'clock, I made an effort to go downstairs to my father-in-law; I had no doubt that my husband would soon return; and I should have liked to wait for him in my room, but I was afraid that, if I did, I should not be in a fit state to go down. Our explanation was bound to be long, perhaps very heated, for I did not venture to flatter myself that it would be affecting. I was really annoyed: yes, I confess it. On the other hand, the tone I ought to adopt with my husband was a source of embarrassment to me. He had called me a child. I was certain that I was right in the main, but I was afraid that I had blundered. If my mother should judge me as he does, I said to myself, I shall be thought wrong, without even being able to gain a hearing. However, I am offended. I shall never be able to behave so as to escape notice: never mind.

I went downstairs. My brother-in-law saw that I had been crying; at first he attempted to rally me, but I begged him in a whisper not to attract attention to me. He took pity on me, and squeezed my hand with an air of sympathy. At nine o'clock, M. d'Épinay had not yet returned; at a quarter-past, we did not wait any longer, and sat down to table. A moment later, he sent me a message that M. de Rinville

had taken him home, and that he should stay to supper with him. Then, dear guardian, I could scarcely control myself. My anxiety for his health overcame all other considerations. But, as I saw that his father was annoyed at the gay life he had led for the last fortnight, I regained courage to defend him.

As soon as we left the table I asked permission to retire, on the plea of the bad night I had spent. I went upstairs to my room and burst into tears. My brother-in-law, feeling uneasy at the agitation from which he saw I was suffering, came to see me, and pressed me so earnestly to let him know the cause of my trouble, that I could not conceal it from him, and I confided everything to him. He greatly blamed his brother. Good heavens! was that the way to console me? He thought that I attached more importance to his irregularities than they deserved. "Remonstrate with him on his offences," he said, "and, however he takes it, do not be so foolish as to be upset." What advice! What! am I the only person in the world who knows how to love? Seeing that his attempts at consolation only aggravated my distress, he added—— Shall I repeat what he said, my dear guardian? If you knew the impression it made upon me! But what meaning has it in the mouth of a man who is incapable of loving? He said to me when he saw—— However, my dear guardian, if he really meant what he said, it must—— I don't know what I meant

to say. But, mind you, never repeat it to me; I do not want to think of it again; I wish to forget it. I believe that, if his words remain in my memory, I shall be obliged to hate my brother. He said to me, "My poor sister, what is the use of getting into such a state? Well! let us suppose the worst; even if he has a mistress, a passing fancy, what matter? Will he love you the less in the main?" "What do you say, brother?" I exclaimed; "what! if he has a mistress!" "I know nothing about it; I only suppose. I have seen him once or twice——" "No, no, my brother, do not finish." "But, once more, what does that prove?" "No, brother, it cannot be." "Very well," said he. For a quarter of an hour there was a struggle in my heart. I wanted, and yet I was afraid, to learn all that he might know about it. Fear gained the victory, and, pretending that I needed rest, I begged him to leave me by myself. I cannot describe my feelings to you. It seemed as if everything conspired to increase the anxiety of my soul. But let me finish this melancholy narrative. I waited for my husband until eleven o'clock; then, from prostration or sheer exhaustion, I went to sleep in my arm-chair. At three o'clock I awoke. I had no doubt that he had returned, and, being unable to satisfy myself, I rang for my maid to undress me. But, as soon as I was in bed, I felt so agitated that I could not go to sleep again. I would have given anything in the

world to know whether my husband had come back. The violent headache which accompanied my agitation convinced me that I was feverish. After a little time I consulted my watch: it was four o'clock. Immediately afterwards, I heard a carriage stop at the door of the house. My uneasiness told me that it was my husband, and the noise which I heard in his room immediately afterwards convinced me that he had arrived. Then, my dear guardian, I could no longer control myself. I jumped out of bed, intending to go and overwhelm him with reproaches. I opened the door of my room, but stopped just as I was on the point of entering his. I reflected that I should perhaps irritate him against me, prevent him from sleeping, and only make him worse than he was. I went back; but I was no sooner in my own room again, than I regretted not having done what I had intended. I lighted the fire again, and spent the rest of the night in going to bed and getting up again.

In the morning I waited impatiently for someone to go into his room; but, as I had always been in the habit of going to see him every morning, on reflection I decided to wait for him, by way of beginning to show my resentment. At last, at eleven o'clock, I heard of him for the first time. He sent to know if he could see me. This ceremonious behaviour, to which I was not accustomed, appeared strange to me, and hurt my feelings greatly. I was still more astonished when I saw him enter

with a smile, and with the air of a man who feels sure of being well received. "How is my little wife?" he said, taking my head between his two hands to kiss me. "Ill," I replied dryly, drawing back. He remained in the same attitude, and, with an air of astonishment, said, "What is the matter? Have I done anything to offend you?" I made no answer, and, having turned my back upon him, walked up and down the room in the endeavour to recover myself. His behaviour on entering, which I did not expect, had deprived me of the power of speech. He followed me, saying, "May I not know the meaning of this attitude, of this silence? For the first time," he added, "I have come when I was not wanted; everything must have a beginning. I will go, madam; you will be pleased to let me know when you think fit that your husband should share your troubles." I confess, my dear guardian, when I heard these words, I began to be afraid that I might have somewhat exaggerated his offences. At any rate, they appeared to me to be amongst the number of those which are more easily felt than rebuked; for I wanted to open my mouth, and all the facts, which still at this moment seem to me so serious, then appeared to me too pitiable to put into words. But, seeing him leave the room with such an air of confidence, I regained courage. I began to hope that, after all, he had only been thoughtless, and that, not having felt the importance of it himself, he was able to listen to me without blushing.

Just as he was shutting the door, I ran to him in tears with open arms. "Monsieur, monsieur," I cried, "this behaviour! your health! Comfort me! Tell me that you love me!" I could say no more; my tears choked me. He came back into the room, took me on his knees, embraced me, and said, with a laugh, "Ah! I thought I knew what was the matter." I confess, dear guardian, that this answer displeased me. I tore myself from his arms and ran to the other end of the room, exclaiming, "What! you thought you knew! You left me most unhappy, and you thought you knew all about it! You have a heart like a stone; yes, you are as hard as a stone yourself. I never wish to hear of you again." He came up to me, and certainly tried to make amends for what he had said; but I refused to listen to him. He then left the room abruptly. Do you know what he did, my dear guardian? He went down to my mother and complained bitterly of my temper, adding that I must certainly be ill, that I was hysterical, that it was impossible to put up with it, that I had flown into a passion for no reason whatever, that I had gone so far as to insult him, and threatened him with never wishing to hear of him again. I was greatly surprised to see my mother enter my room: she treated me like a child, and accused me of pride and misplaced haughtiness. I did not conceal from her any of my reasons for complaint. Her opinion was, that M. d'Epinay might have behaved with a little

more delicacy; but she none the less blamed me for attaching too much importance to what they all call trifles. Above all, she considered that I had lost my temper in a most unbecoming manner. She declared that it was absolutely necessary to prevent what had taken place reaching my father-in-law's ears, and that not a moment must be lost in bringing my husband back. She tried to convince me that he was grieved and offended. I could not agree with this idea. I really believed that I was wrong, although a certain secret feeling still told me the contrary; but I refused to listen to it, being afraid that it might perhaps arise from my vanity, wounded by M. de Jully's words, to which I ought not to attach credence—at least, I hope so. My husband was sent for, and came to receive, I might say, excuses. I made none, however; I limited myself to saying to him, "Sir, if the excess of my grief has caused me to treat you in a manner opposed to the feelings of my heart, you have only yourself to blame. Look at my soul and judge us both." He made no answer, embraced me very tenderly, as my mother declares, and said, "Well, well, my dear, let us forget, and say no more about it." My mother embraced us both, and, as she was getting up to leave the room, said, "Come! dress yourselves, come to dinner, and do not let M. de Bellegarde notice anything; you are regular children." My husband, while escorting my mother out of the room, told me that he was going to dress, and that

he would come back and see me afterwards. This pretended reconciliation by no means calmed my mind. I continued even more melancholy, if possible, than before. It seemed to me that there was something inconsistent and irresolute in all my conduct, and even in my ideas. In short, my dear guardian, I confess that I myself came to the conclusion that I was a child, not in my sorrow, but in my conduct.

My only consolation in all these melancholy reflections was my tears. I was utterly unfit to show myself, and, feeling really unwell, I decided to go to bed. After dinner, my husband came to keep me company for an hour. As there was no longer any question of an explanation, he might have attempted to make amends for his behaviour without compromising himself. In spite of that, he seemed as if he were waiting for the first advances to come from me. He was thoughtful and absent-minded. I must be of an unforgiving disposition, my dear guardian, for the utmost I could do was to keep my temper and smile at him now and again, always with tears in my eyes. However, he came and kissed me, but this did not make me any happier. I do not believe that it is possible to pass all at once from the bitterest grief to a calm frame of mind, and, still less, to that degree of contentedness which is the characteristic of happiness. And then—my step-brother's words, which I should be glad to forget. At last, about four o'clock, M. d'Épinay went out. Having had all

the time after dinner to myself, I felt tolerably calm in the evening. I firmly resolved to forget all that had passed, and to take my cue from my husband.

Lastly, my dear guardian, come; lose no time. I cannot live like this. I have still a thousand things to tell you, but the pen falls from my hand. Come, I entreat you.

I hastened to reply to Madame d'Epinay's letter. I tried as far as possible to calm her. With this object, I said nothing about her husband's offences; on the contrary, I reproached her with that which she had herself committed in demanding, in a manner, that he should confess himself in the wrong, instead of appearing satisfied with the tokens of regret and affection which he had shown.

It may easily be understood that I did not inform her of all that I knew. They had only been married three months, and nearly six weeks since I had been informed that he was running after an actress at the Comédie, to whom he had made considerable advances. I had spoken to him about it a fortnight before, and reminded him of what he owed to himself. He denied the facts, with which I was well acquainted; gave me the most positive assurances that there was nothing irregular in his conduct, and pretended to be offended at my suspicions; and I, for my part, pretended to believe that he spoke the truth. Unfortunately, since that time,

he has been only too consistent in his irregular life, and his frequent unseemly and unjust attacks upon his wife have always been a sure proof that he was at the time afraid of the outbreak of some fresh folly. When Madame d'Épinay begged me to speak to him, I did so, more severely than before, and showed him proofs which it was impossible for him to deny. He admitted everything, but in his confession he mixed up so many meannesses and falsehoods that from that moment I ceased to have any hopes of him. However, I persuaded Madame d'Epinay to be gentle and indulgent, and exhorted Madame d'Esclavelles to humour her daughter's inclinations a little more. As far as I was able, I made her understand the evil effects of always showing herself gloomy and severe towards her; in fact, my ward's affection for her mother was giving way to a feeling of weariness of her conversation and continual lectures, and this made her reserved. The only result of my exhortation was that Madame d'Esclavelles behaved inconsistently. At one time she followed her natural impulses and principles; at another, she remembered my advice, especially when she saw the ill-success of her own ideas.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* MADAME LA PRÉSIDENTE DE MAUPEOU.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—To tell the truth, I no longer understand anything about the usages of

society or the proprieties! All this disturbs me greatly. I must tell you in a few words what has happened to me. The day before yesterday I went to Madame Desfontaines'. After supper, everybody began to torment me to go to the ball; at first I stoutly refused, and ended by going there, after I had been assured by all that my name should not be announced, that my mother should know nothing about it, and that we should be back by two o'clock.

As soon as I arrived, one of the maskers, whom I was unable to recognise, came up and told me all my history, related several details of our domestic life, and certain conversations in full which I had had with different persons since my marriage. M. d'Épinay was close to me. I repeated to him all that the masker had told me. Yesterday evening we were still trying to think who it could be, when, as she was helping me to bed, my maid handed me a letter, which she told me had been brought to her by an unknown person, who had begged her to give it into my hands alone, and then only on condition that I promised her not to read it in my husband's presence. At first I hesitated to take it, but at last I determined to read it. Its contents was as follows:

MADAM,—Since you positively desire to know who I am, I will reveal myself under the aspect which most flatters my vanity, and which does me the most honour. I adore you: ever since the moment when chance first threw me in your way until now, my love has only increased. Fear of displeasing you has put off this confession of my love: but why should I any longer conceal my feelings from you? I only aspire to obtain permission from your-

self to adore you. I esteem you too highly to venture to claim more. It is your purity, your shining virtue, which has carried me away. I can respect your love for your husband; but I cannot help exclaiming to myself, How happy he is! Will you forgive me, madam, for the embarrassment I caused you at the ball? Ah! do not reproach me with the two happiest hours of my life.

I cannot endure the sight of any other women since I have known you. What a difference there is! and how clearly I feel it! O heavens! what will become of me if, misled by prejudices, the full absurdity of which you are prevented by want of experience from feeling, you should refuse me the only thing which henceforth can make me happy—the right to love you and to venture to tell you so. If you condescend to give me an answer in person, I shall be at the opera ball on Monday. I know that you are to be there, and I shall have the honour of paying my respects to you. Although I have promised to escort another lady, I shall have eyes for no one but you.

Guess, my dear cousin, by whom this letter was signed. By M. de Canaples. You can easily imagine how disgusted I was at such insolence. I scolded my maid severely. I immediately took the letter to my husband, greatly annoyed at having opened it without his knowledge. Would you believe that he laughed till he cried, confessed that he had himself suggested to the Chevalier part of what he had said to me at the ball, in order to enjoy my astonishment; but that the rascal (such was the word he used) had not confided to him his tender feelings, or his intention of writing to me. I attempted to prove to him that he had been the cause of the Chevalier's insolence by giving him such intimate details of our private life. He laughed at me. I suggested that we should not go to the ball at all on Monday; but he insists upon my going, and declares that, if we do not, it will have a bad effect upon the Chevalier's mind. In reality,

I am very glad; for I thought it very hard to give up the opera ball, which I have never seen, for this Chevalier de Canaples, whom I do not want to see, and for whom I do not care at all; and what more could I do for anyone for whom I did care? We shall go to the ball. M. d'Épinay has given me an additional reason, which convinces me that it is absolutely indispensable for me to go, under present circumstances. He says that, if I do not appear, the Chevalier will inevitably believe that I want to avoid him, that I look upon him as a dangerous man, and will boast about it; for, according to what people say, he is a regular coxcomb.

If he speaks to me, I shall pretend that I have not received his letter; if he writes me another, I shall send it back unopened. I would not have my mother know of this adventure for the world. She holds the opinion that a man never ventures to make a declaration to a woman unless she has given him reason to believe, by her words or behaviour, that he will be listened to. However, I am positive that I have done nothing to justify a declaration on the part of the Chevalier de Canaples; his letter is a proof of this; for he expresses no doubt of my discretion or of my love for my husband. Never mind; I am distressed by it, and I have begged M. d'Épinay to say nothing about it before my mother, not even in jest: he has promised not to do so. I will say nothing to my guardian either, although I tell him everything.

Good-bye, my dear friend. That was what I wanted to tell you. I will come and dine with you to-morrow. By the way, my husband does not want anyone to know that he has seen the Chevalier's letter; do not say anything to him about it.

*Note from* MADAME LA PRÉSIDENTE DE MAUPEOU *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

Your adventure is certainly a very curious one. But are you sure that it is the Chevalier de Canaples? You cannot be too careful against compromising yourself with this madcap. It is a great piece of insolence on his part; I am amazed at it. However, if he is at the ball on Monday, and if he speaks to you again, there will be no room for doubt. I hope that you will keep me informed about this adventure. Good-bye, dear cousin; I have a frightful headache.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* MADAME DE MAUPEOU.

Yes, my dear cousin, he was at the ball. More sighs, more questions from him; no answer from me, only a few "Whats," or "Really, sir, I do not understand what you mean." At last I utterly disconcerted him. Good heavens, how ridiculous he was! Then, again, this morning, a letter, which he tried to get delivered to me in the same way as the first; but I had taught my maid her lesson so thoroughly that she absolutely refused to take it. I want to get up to

dine with my relatives, and I shall go to bed again, for they must not know that I have been to the ball. Good heavens! if my mother were to hear of it, what would become of me? Good night, or good day, whichever you please.

Madame de Maupeou, who was in love with the Chevalier herself, was secretly annoyed at learning what had taken place between him and Madame d'Épinay, and, although the latter's virtuous character and affection for her husband ought to have completely reassured her, she would not let her lover go to her cousin's house without her. On her part, Madame d'Épinay was only waiting for her husband's departure to shut her door against the Chevalier. Nevertheless, certain remarks uttered in society made me very uneasy about my ward. I knew that her superiority to other women had early gained her enemies, to whom it must be confessed that she often afforded opportunities of attack by her liveliness and simplicity.

I had already, on several occasions, attempted to employ her parents' authority to remedy or prevent annoyances, which I considered to be as injurious to the welfare as to the reputation of Madame d'Épinay; but their limited knowledge of the world and their constant lack of firmness made them so awkward in everything with which they interfered, that the result was nearly always the opposite of what I expected. This made me resolve, once for all, never to

appeal to them again; besides, I am convinced that it is impossible to escape one's destiny.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. D'ÉPINAY.

*March*, 1746.

What! my dearest, my angel, you have gone! you have had the heart to leave me—and for six months! No; I shall never support the weariness of so long an absence. After only four hours it is already unendurable. I have invited Madame de Maupeou to come and keep me company. At the present moment I should be vexed if she came and disturbed the only consolation which is agreeable to me—that of writing to you. Oh, my darling! will you forgive me if I curse the cause which prevents me from following you? I have yielded too easily to my mother's fears; no one, in a condition like mine, has ever been prevented from travelling; quite the contrary. Yesterday I was happy—and even this morning. Now I am no longer so. I have not even the hope of feeling easy six months hence. I wish to spend my days in writing to you, and my nights in thinking of you. Let me know all that you do. Above all, take care of your health; remember that my life is bound up with yours. If the slightest accident should happen to you—but I have no need to exaggerate my anxieties, in order to feel them keenly. I am waiting impatiently to hear from you. One thing especially

alarms me, that you do not sufficiently appreciate the necessity of providing in advance against all the trifling accidents that may happen. Perhaps you will be more thoughtful for others. Well, then; imagine that it is myself of whom you have to take care, and treat yourself as you would treat me; then I shall feel easy.

Good-bye, my dearest. Ah! if our separation grieves you as much as myself, how I pity you!

If M. d'Épinay, who was often obliged by his duties to leave his wife, had preserved all her letters, as she kept his, we should be in possession of the most accurate and consecutive account of the history of their minds and of the various emotions which stirred Madame d'Épinay: all her letters were a diary of her life. If certain details have escaped my memory, the different motives which influenced her actions are still present to me. I have known few minds, the history of which is as interesting to follow as hers. The grief which she felt at their first separation after their marriage was so evidently genuine, and she showed it so openly, that it was difficult to avoid being affected by it.

From the time of her husband's departure, she believed herself alone in the world. No one who has felt a violent passion has failed to be conscious of the void caused by a first separation. How precious at that time is all that represents to us the object of our regrets, and how tiresome is everything which takes our attention from our

grief! Madame d'Épinay abandoned herself to all the follies which are the result of the delirium of a first passion. She had her husband's furniture moved into her rooms. She resolved to use by preference everything which belonged to him and which might have been used by him. She would only see persons to whom she could speak about him incessantly. She found countless excuses for mentioning his name, which seemed to be connected in a wonderful manner with everything that was said to her. The tears which he had shed on leaving her were all the more precious, as she secretly felt uneasy about his affection for her. This mark of tenderness seemed to her a triumph, of which she was not slow to boast in the presence of myself and Madame de Maupeou. She could not imagine how she had been able to let him go without her. The fear of being an expense to him had made her hesitate, but the commencement of her pregnancy had finally decided her. As Madame de Maupeou and Madame de Vignolles left her free to grieve in their company, she yielded to their advice readily but without satisfaction. She went out nearly every day. M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles offered no objection, since they themselves felt the necessity of diverting her mind from a grief which would inevitably have injured her health. She spent all the mornings and part of the night in writing to her husband. Before he left, he had given her certain instructions regarding his affairs, amongst others, to keep back every month a portion of the sum which his

father sent him, to pay some debts, the statement of which he had left with her. This occupation afforded her the liveliest satisfaction, and even the sight of her husband's creditors overwhelmed her with joy, because it reminded her of him; she prolonged the interview with a cleverness which enchanted these worthy people and made me die with laughing when I was present.

Eight days after M. d'Épinay's departure, several creditors, whose names were not included on the list, presented themselves and demanded payment. She put off the order she had been commissioned to give to the carriage-maker for a second carriage, which he was to make for her husband during his absence. She also discovered that he had bought a splendid gilded barouche at the sale of the Président de Maux's effects, and she wrote to ask what he meant to do about all these things; she ventured to remonstrate timidly upon the magnificence of the barouche, and the inconvenience that might result from the use of it. Her greatest fear was, that she might hurt his feelings; and this fear, which she cherished only too long, has often done her harm. On this occasion she laid less stress upon the extravagance of the purchase than upon his father's probable anger. He replied that he had kept this purchase a secret, that he had only made it for her sake, to afford her a pleasant surprise on his return. In other respects, he strongly approved of her manner of life; her conduct, in fact, was bound to please

him: dissipations, the play, and a blind submission to his wishes, were, according to his ideas, the height of happiness. She had also taken advantage of her husband's absence to shut the door upon the Chevalier de Canaples; in fact, I never met him at her house, except the day before he left to join his regiment, when she received him by her husband's particular request. He talked to her for a long time about the temporary embarrassment which M. d'Épinay's absence caused him, since, according to his account, he was in great difficulties at the time. She rightly considered these observations as a roundabout way of trying to borrow money from her; and she broke off the conversation the more quickly as she was naturally of a proud disposition, and was greatly displeased at the Chevalier's venturing to speak to her about his private affairs.

Her husband had asked her, in one of his letters, why she never mentioned the Chevalier de Canaples. She replied, "The reason is that I cannot speak of him to you in the manner you would like." She then gave him an account of her behaviour to the Chevalier during his absence, at the same time entreating him to excuse her from seeing him again after he returned. She did not conceal from him her apprehension that his perfidious friend had formed the design of depriving her of his affection; and, as she had heard a very bad account of his character and principles, she believed that his conduct showed that he was scheming to lead her astray.

On the subject of her apprehensions and his private affairs, M. d'Épinay sent the following reply. It will at the same time afford an opportunity of judging how utterly she was blinded by her infatuation. The letter is one of the best written and most affectionate that she ever received from him.

*From* M. D'ÉPINAY *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

MY DEAREST,—Two of your letters have reached me almost at the same moment. New reasons for loving you still more, if I were not already inclined to do so by the tenderest affection! The remembrance of Paris and all that attaches me to it ought to assure you how much I regret having left you, or, at least, the circumstances that have prevented your accompanying me. You may imagine how I should like to rejoin you; but I feel that I must devote a certain amount of time to this journey and my affairs, and you ought to be pleased with me for so doing. Any resources that I find here can be at best a makeshift. You must not be afraid that anything will ever efface your image from my heart.

I have nothing of interest to communicate; therefore, the best thing I can do is to reply to the several points in your letter. This barouche, as to which you enter into such detail, may seem to you magnificent, either because you have never seen anything better, or because you have been prejudiced by those who have spoken to you about it, but, in reality, it is nothing extra-

ordinary. In time you will be pleased with it. I quite understand that it is nothing but a kindly feeling which inclines you to enter into considerations of economy which, in reality, ought not to stop us. I will keep it, as well as the harness and the two horses which have been bought. I have made all arrangements, and no alteration must be made in them.

I am writing to my carriage-maker to finish my carriage, and to put the last touch to the barouche, that it may be ready just as I have ordered it, even before my return. I do not know how you understand it, my dearest; it would be very singular if my father should maintain that the hundred pistoles[1] a month which he gives me while I am away ought to be reckoned as part of my income; they ought only to be considered as pocket-money. I must have a thorough understanding with him about that; I will even ask you to inform him of what I shall have to say to him, and to make him understand that, considering the unavoidable expenses which my marriage has entailed, it is impossible for me to get out of difficulty without this gratuity, which is nothing to him, and is absolutely necessary to me.

My dearest, you will have to try and pay out of your own money something on account of my servants' tailor's bill, and of another that is owing to a certain Thierry. They must be satisfied with that and wait for the rest until I come back. It is true that I had forgotten to include

[1] A pistole = 10 francs.

them in the list of my debts which I made before I left. I do not know how that happened; be kind enough to repair the omission, and I will settle with you as soon as I can.

I think you are too hard upon the poor Chevalier de Canaples. He is unfairly treated. People are jealous of his merits; as for his supposed offences, he has been unfortunate rather than guilty. If he gives himself airs, he has a right to do so. Besides, we know the same people; we are always together; he has given me proofs of his friendship when the occasion demanded; I am under obligations to him which I cannot ignore, and on these grounds I hope that you will receive him as usual, otherwise he will inevitably believe that it is I who prevent you. I need say no more to persuade you. As for your fears they are devoid of common sense. A man may very well tell a woman that he is in love with her, without her head being turned by it. Oh, the vanity of woman!

I am delighted that you are going to settle at Épinay, and still more pleased with the fancy you seem to have for that estate; but you must have society and amusements. I hope that my father will consent to give some entertainments there. You have your own carriage and his at your disposal. The country offers no inducements if one is alone there or always sees the same things. You must create some variety there, and I myself want you to tell me all about your pleasures and all that goes on at Épinay.

You know to whom I owe compliments and remembrances. I leave them in your hands. I expect that in a few days my business here will be finished, and that I shall be able to leave and continue my journey. Nevertheless, my return to Paris seems a long time off. The further I get from it, the more I yearn for the pleasure of approaching it again. Support me in this hope, my dear Emilie, by the happiness of receiving your letters. I feel that I am forgetting myself and fancying that I am with you. It pains me to leave you, but it must be so, and I can say no more, except that I am yours devotedly.

After this letter, which delighted her, as if it had been worth the trouble, she did not receive another for three or four posts. If she had attributed this silence to negligence on the part of her husband, she would have been exceedingly unhappy.

At last she received a second letter very much like the first, in which M. d'Épinay did not seem to imagine that he had made his wife uneasy by not writing to her for nearly a fortnight. Emilie did not appear to notice his coldness, or, rather, she did not confess it. She fastened upon two or three tender phrases taken out of a book which she had not read, which convinced her that no one was ever loved more deeply or tenderly than herself; but she was soon undeceived, and was only the more to be pitied. She found herself without a penny, as

she had spent nearly all the money she had in paying her husband's debts. She was some months in arrears, and necessary expenses had to be paid. As she did not venture to inform either M. de Bellegarde or her mother of her difficulties, for fear of enlightening them upon her husband's conduct, she wrote to him, representing in the strongest terms the state of their affairs; but the constant fear of saying something humiliating to him caused her to use such guarded language that it usually deprived her representations of their good effect. Either in consequence of this, or from the want of consideration and thoughtfulness which characterised M. d'Épinay's conduct in regard to everything which did not flatter his tastes and his passions, he hardly vouchsafed any reply upon this point, merely remarking incidentally that he was very sorry he would not be able to pay his debts for several months. In the same letter he was also very careful to inform her that he was sending her a dress which he had thought so pretty, that he had been unable to deny himself the pleasure of purchasing it for her. This gallantry was accompanied by those seductive compliments which make dupes of all upright and sensitive souls. I had a great mind to advise my ward not to accept it; but what would she have gained by a course to which her heart and disposition would have given the lie a thousand times for one?

On the point of settling at Épinay with

her relations, she determined to go out very little, so as to avoid gambling and the expenses inseparable from a residence in town. She formed various plans for occupying herself: her education was deficient, and she begged me to be her guide in the plan of study which she had marked out for herself. Work, reading, and drawing were to fill up the time which she did not devote to her correspondence with her husband. Her relations, to whom she communicated her plan without informing them of the real reason of it, were the more delighted, as they found themselves alone with Mademoiselle de Bellegarde; for M. de Jully had been sent by his father to one of his friends at some distance from Paris, to make him forget, if possible, Mademoiselle Chambon, for whom he appeared to entertain too lively an affection. M. de Bellegarde was alarmed for the consequences of this growing attachment. Mademoiselle Chambon was of obscure family. Her connections were, in his opinion, an insurmountable obstacle against her union with M. de Jully, for whom he desired a marriage that might advance his interests. She was, it is true, very wealthy; but the manner in which her late father had acquired his fortune was not considered very legitimate.

Madame d'Épinay went to take leave of her friends. Madame de Maupeou blamed her, and even carried her raillery so far that my ward felt obliged to confide to her the real reason of her

retirement, of which she as little approved. "You are very foolish," she said to her. "Did you marry a man of fortune to remain in poverty? What is the use of this comfort with which one credits us if we allow ourselves to go without things that are most indispensable? Our husbands are obliged to pay our debts, and our honesty in that respect should be limited to contracting none that are useless or excessive. In your place I should deny myself nothing that was necessary or suitable to my position." Madame d'Épinay represented to her that, if she acted in that manner, her debts would necessarily become known to her father-in-law, who would believe that her tastes were as expensive as her husband's. "Very well," replied her cousin, "remain in poverty; but, at any rate, enjoy yourself. Do not bury yourself alive."

## CHAPTER II

(1746)

This advice made no alteration in Madame d'Épinay's plans. We set out for the country, where she actually led the life she had marked out for herself. Her thoughts being always occupied with her husband, she wrote to him frequently; but the greater her affection, the less she found that he returned it. She exaggerated her sorrow, and ended by falling into a state of melancholy. At that time several young wives died in childbirth. Her heart, inclined to sadness, was ready to be alarmed by the fear of a similar fate. She did not speak of it, but on several occasions I surprised her, with tears in her eyes, making all arrangements for leaving mementoes to her friends, and, to her husband, proofs of all the suffering that his indifference, or, rather, the weakness of his feelings, had caused her. Madame de Maupeou did all she possibly could to persuade her to alter her mode of life; but she always set about it so foolishly, that her remonstrances produced no effect. M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles, who were ignorant of the reason of her sadness, attributed it solely to the absence of her

husband, and, while exhorting her to be patient, highly commended her for living in retirement, and assured her that it was the only way to keep her husband by her side when he returned, and to lead him away from the dissipations into which he was sure to let himself be dragged. From another point of view, in the midst of all her cousin's extravagances, there were also to be found some ideas which were none the less sensible for being expressed in a lively manner. The following is a letter which she wrote to my ward at this time, and which somewhat shook her resolutions.

*From* MADAME DE MAUPEOU *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

MY DEAR AND GREATLY TO BE PITIED COUSIN,— I have kept my room for a week, without having succeeded in getting you to accept any of my invitations to come and see me. I am enchanted with your excuse of yesterday for not coming to my concert. "There were too many people." What a feeble remark! What! because your husband is away, you must live in seclusion? You who, a month ago, seemed as if you were fastened to the sails of a windmill, have suddenly abandoned yourself to the most pitiable solitude! And for what? For a husband who is running about the country, and is to be absent some months. Be careful; I assure you that you will make yourself supremely ridiculous.

It is decidedly proper to love one's husband; it is even an admirable thing, but there are

limits in everything. I can well believe that your dear relations are delighted with this new kind of life: they have someone else to see them yawn, and that is something, when people make a practice of yawning. Joking apart, let us think for a moment to what all this will lead you.

Your condition and the life you intend to lead will affect you with a melancholy and sadness which will not make you more amiable. Those beautiful eyes will grow dull, those pretty fresh cheeks will fade, and, on his return, your husband will be exceedingly grateful to you for the improvement. I see in this another misfortune which appears to me worth mentioning: you will no longer be in harmony with the irregular and frivolous taste of this delightful creature (I beg your pardon), and this may well produce fatal changes either for one or the other; or else you will try to begin again to live like him, which will most certainly weary you, and you will gain the reputation into the bargain of being a silly woman who does not know what she wants.

Do you understand, my pretty cousin? Profit by all I say, and come and see me. Good-bye.

This advice failed to persuade Madame d'Épinay to change her manner of life. She was entering upon the fifth month of her pregnancy. The joy caused by the prospect before her did not last long. Her former fears returned

with increased activity. "What! perhaps I am destined to die in bringing into the world this little creature which is so dear to me. I shall not enjoy the happiness of having given it its existence: and what will be its fate when I am dead?" Such were the apprehensions which she communicated to me. I admitted that instances of the misfortune which she dreaded were not uncommon; but I pointed out to her that, as a rule, only women who led an irregular life and paid no attention to their health fell victims to it. I quoted all the happy results in the case of those who took care of themselves and led a life almost similar to her own. At last my words persuaded her; the more so as I ended by advising her to try and avoid heating her blood, and to keep herself in a fit state to bring up her child herself, which would infallibly protect her from the result which she dreaded. She eagerly seized upon this idea, which, she declared, enabled her to look forward to a perpetual source of comfort and satisfaction. She wanted to mention it to her mother at once, and even to her father-in-law, but the fear that they might dissuade her from the idea for some time held her back. She was afraid that they might consider it singular; and, at last, not venturing to take it upon herself to speak to them about it, she commissioned me to do so.

M. de Bellegarde said that he would give his consent, if the physician approved and her husband did not object. As for her mother,

the subject aroused in her every possible kind of apprehension—the singularity which it might seem to indicate, the ridicule it would bring upon her daughter, if she were obliged to abandon an undertaking that was perhaps beyond her strength, anxiety in regard to her health; in fact, everything was made the excuse for an objection. However, I succeeded in making her see clearly enough how important it was to my ward that she should be allowed to amuse herself with this idea, that she gave the same answer as M. de Bellegarde. Madame d'Épinay wrote to her husband to sound him quietly upon this resolution, and we returned to Paris. She had not left her husband in ignorance of any of her troubles. However, she received a letter from him which, owing to the ironical manner in which he treated her fears, was not encouraging. We shall see what happened at that time. On this occasion my veracity shall silence my vanity, and, should some severe critics condemn the part which I played during this period of Madame d'Épinay's life, I beg them at least to give me credit for my good faith, and never to forget that it is not a romance which I am offering to the public, but the real Memoirs of a family and of several societies of men and women, liable to the weaknesses of humanity.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE LISIEUX.

*Seven p.m.*

Ah, my dear guardian! what shall I do without you? I am dying! Must I confess the conduct—— Did I deserve it? I was right to fear. Excuse me; I do not know what I am saying; let me have rest, a moment's rest. I must try and get used to the idea of my misfortune. It seems to me that if you were here, I could tell you. You would guess, but—the idea of writing, writing a full account of things!

*Midnight.*

I am no calmer; on the contrary, whenever I think, it increases my unhappiness. I need your advice; listen then.

I went yesterday to the Palais[1] with Madame de Maupeou and Madame de Maurepaire to get my watch-chain mended. I did not find La Frenaye, whom I wanted to see. They told me that he would soon be back, and in the meantime we went upstairs into the shop to kill time for a moment. There we found Mademoiselle la Frenaye engaged in mounting in pearls a richly-set portrait. I went up to look at it, and, just as I was going to take it in my hand, Madame la Frenaye came up and quickly covered it with her own, saying to me, "Excuse me, Madame, we have been advised not to let anybody see it." Nevertheless, I had had time to glance at it, and

[1] The Palais de Justice. The shops and galleries of the Palais Royal were not built till about forty years later.

I had distinctly recognised my husband's portrait: the woman's eagerness left me no doubt upon the matter. I did my utmost to control myself and conceal my emotion. "You are perfectly right to be discreet," said I, "but to whom does it belong?" "I cannot tell you," replied Madame la Frenaye. Madame de Maupeou came up and wanted to know what we were talking about. I did my best to end the conversation, for fear of seeing my misfortune publicly confirmed. At last she succeeded so well that she extracted the confession that the portrait belonged to a girl.

Promise me, my dear guardian, that, while telling me plainly your opinion of my behaviour, you will make no comments, that you will not aggravate my misfortune, and that, after you have given me your advice as to this painful incident, you will say nothing more about it. Feeling confident that you will do this, I finish my story.

I was anxious to get up and leave, on the plea that we were waiting too long, while, in reality, I was afraid that Madame de Maupeou might push her inquiries further; but my strength failed me, and I remained stunned. The ladies saw that I was unwell. Fortunately, they took me home without discovering the reason, and I got rid of them as soon as I could.

As yet it was a trifle, dear guardian. I wanted to disbelieve my misfortune, and felt almost able to do so; there was no certainty about it; now there is no longer room for doubt. Will my husband still love me if he learns that I know all? Can I love

him, or, rather, declare my love to him, when I have so serious a reproach to bring against him? What is to become of me? All the happiness of my life is over: I shall spend it in sorrow and bitterness. He has deceived me once: how do I know it is the only time? Never, never shall I be able to feel confidence in him again. It seems to me that I have been robbed of everything, that I am left alone in the world. Ah! what have I done to him that he should make me so unhappy?

Mother! Madame de Maupeou! you were right: he has never loved me. Oh, my guardian! if I did not respect—— Alas! I must preserve my life for the sake of the unfortunate creature which I am about to bring into the world. Will it compensate me for the wrongs of its father?

*Four o'clock in the morning.*

I cannot rest; I must write. You no doubt remember that, when M. d'Épinay gave me his portrait, he had another taken, because, as he said, he did not consider the first a sufficiently good likeness. I wanted to keep both. He raised an objection on the score of economy, to which I had no answer to make, and I gave back to him the one which I liked least. In the cruel state of uncertainty in which I was yesterday, I wrote to the painter and asked him to tell me whether M. d'Épinay had paid for the second portrait or sent it back to him. I

pretended that I had been commissioned to see about it; but that my husband had left me so many other things to think of when he left, that I was not sure what he had told me about this. Alas! my dear guardian, his answer was clear, and what I feared—the portraits are both paid for.

After having taken a dozen resolutions, which by turns seemed good and bad, I have at last decided upon the following course. I am writing to my husband. How dear that name once was to me! See if you think this letter is likely to bring him back to me, if he still has any pity or gratitude left. Good-bye; I have said far more to you about it than I intended; but—put yourself in my place. Oh! if I could only think that I was unjust on this occasion! I am waiting for your opinion before I decide to send my letter or keep it back. Make what excuses you please for me to my parents; I am not in a fit state to meet them. What would become of them if they knew my sorrows?

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. D'ÉPINAY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Chance has caused me to discover an imprudence which you have committed, the consequences of which may be so serious for you that I cannot avoid taking notice of it. I hope that it is in reality no more than an indiscretion, an act of thoughtlessness. I hope so; I am sure of it, otherwise I should die of grief. How could I survive the

idea of finding you unfaithful? Is not that a fulfilment of my saddest forebodings, a thousand times more deadly than the misfortune which I anticipated? But this is dwelling too much upon an idle fancy; you are only thoughtless, you cannot be guilty. You have given your portrait to a girl: that is too absurd to excite my apprehensions; but, have you reflected upon the impropriety of letting her wear it publicly, and upon what those who may see it are sure to think of you? I have said enough to make me feel sure that, as soon as you have received my letter, you will order her to send it back to you. Let us think no more about it, and speak about something else.

One word more. Out of consideration for me, you may perhaps think yourself bound to deny the fact; any attempt at concealment would offend me: it is your friend, not your wife, who is addressing you; besides, I have seen the portrait. It is richly set. I still think that it is unnecessary for you to write yourself. It would even be better that you should get one of your friends to tell her that she has to return the portrait, and then your friend could give it back to me. A word also upon the insolence it would show on her part to wear it. Adieu, my friend! I have a bad headache, and I want to go to bed.

I immediately went to Madame d'Épinay. I found her in a state difficult to describe. Her excessive despair alarmed me. Unfortunately, I

had but little consolation to offer her; it was only by reminding her of the injury she would do to her child, and the impossibility of bringing it up herself, if she continued to give way to despair, that I succeeded in calming her. The next day I took her back to Épinay; and, after four days, finding that she was more disposed to master her grief, and seeing that she placed great hopes in her letters to her husband, I encouraged her in her expectations, and returned to Paris, where my affairs required my presence.

*From* M. D'ÉPINAY *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

I should very much like to know who are the people who have told my little wife that I had given my portrait to little Rosette; it is a pure invention. You have certainly not seen it; but it is rather curious that you should allow yourself to listen to such stories. It can only be one of those who have been witnesses of my folly. I suspect M. de Montreuil of it, and, if it is he, I hope that, after such conduct, you will not see him again. He should, at least, have told you what really occurred; but no—that would not have been spiteful enough, and he apparently has reasons for showing his spite.

At a supper, at which he and the Chevalier de Canaples were present, Rosette took the likeness out of my pocket and kept it, in spite of all my efforts to get it back again. I even told her, in order to induce her to return it, that I wanted to get it set with diamonds to make her a present of it. She

answered that she would get it set herself, and that I need only give her the sum which I was willing to spend upon it. The company sentenced me to pay, and I got off with 60 louis. But I do not believe that she wears it. Indeed, I am most strongly inclined to doubt it. Such thoughtless conduct is merely an invention on the part of others. She is a good girl, who would not wish to cause me annoyance, of that I feel sure.

However, I will write to her to learn the truth, and to prevent such a thing happening again, until I return. Then I will try and persuade her to return the likeness to me. You see that all this is not worth the trouble of being annoyed at, and need not make you use such expressions as "unfaithful," "ridiculous," and I know not what others, which you have employed; but I set them down to the heat of your first impulse. I hope that my dear little wife will henceforth resume her usual charming style, and will not allow anyone to speak to her about me so improperly. It is an imprudence of which you have not felt the consequence, but which, I am sure, you will never be guilty of again.

MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE LISIEUX.

I have, perhaps, never felt the need of you so much as since you left. The uproar of crowds of visitors quite stunned me for a few days; but, since we have been alone for a week, I really no longer recognise myself. All the occupations, which were my resource against trouble and weariness, have become distasteful to me: reading

bores me, painting disgusts me, work tires me. I no longer know what to do. All my ideas are gloomy. I am in good health, and worry myself all day in the hope of finding myself unwell. I say, in the hope, for this is really the only desire I feel. You will ask me what has brought me to this frame of mind. I see hardly anything else but a cold and harsh letter, varied with unseemly jests, which I have received from my husband, in answer to the perhaps too tender reproaches which I brought against him. If you only knew how anxious I was to forget his offences, and how greatly I need to be happy!

I send you an extract from his letter that you may judge of it; for I am afraid of exaggerating to myself the causes of my grief: I have felt so strange for some time. I intended to go to Paris without delay, but my stepfather and my mother propose to make a two days' visit there; they have not yet settled when they will start, and I shall wait for them. Adieu, my dear guardian. I wanted to ask you—can a married woman make a will?

M. D'ÉPINAY *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

So then, my dear friend, you are again wound up to the pitch of the most charming affection. Your husband ought to feel flattered that you lavish upon him the expressions of a feeling which awakes or goes to sleep at pleasure, according as you are more or less occupied with things which are foreign to it. I am grateful for your expressions of amiability and affection, and I

apologise for having ventured to confound you with the generality of women. I believed that they, as well as ourselves, were all made nearly after the same pattern; and, as we think a great deal about them, I imagined that they returned the compliment; but I have made a mistake—well and good. You shall teach me to know them, and it shall be your task to show me that I have been wrong in what may concern you in particular.

Continue to let me hear about your amusements and occupations. Your arrangements must be comic in their simplicity, even though you do not expressly say so; for I should not like to swear. I am also waiting to hear from you about the preparations for your accouchement. Is not that your chief occupation? You must not wait till the last moment to return to Paris. I hope there will still be some time in your life unoccupied which will leave you leisure to write to me. My own time is so taken up that I cannot tell you how it is employed. I am astonished myself, and, really and truly, I have only time left to embrace you and tell you, my dear friend, that I am yours devotedly.

*From* M. DE BELLEGARDE *to* M. D'ÉPINAY.

*Sept. 27th*, 1746.

MY DEAR SON,—You do not expect the good news I have to tell you. Your wife was safely delivered yesterday evening of a fine boy. She is as well as can be expected. I am very pleased

to be able to give you this news, and to congratulate you. This morning your aunt and myself stood godfather and godmother to the child, who is doing well.

My stepdaughter embraces you, and trusts that you will be as pleased as ourselves with the charming present which she has made us. Her mother will not leave her. I am returning this evening to Épinay to bring back the whole household, which cannot be divided. I will let you hear from me soon. I also expect soon to hear of your departure, for you ought to have settled all the company's business. Try and finish quickly what you have to do, my dear son, without in any way neglecting it. When you are ready, I will ask for leave for you. Your presence here is necessary for your dear wife's satisfaction, for your own private interests, and for us all. I will say nothing more about it to-day. Good-bye, my dear son. I am, as I ever shall be, your affectionate father.

*From* MADAME LA PRÉSIDENTE DE MAUPEOU *to* M. DE LISIEUX.

I am writing to you, Monsieur, at the bedside of our patient. She has kept worrying me to take up the pen. She said that she had a hundred things to tell you. I thought that I was going to write from her dictation, but apparently the copiousness of her ideas stifles her; for, during the quarter of an hour that I have been sitting in front of this table, with my ears on the alert,

waiting for the utterances of her pretty lips, she has done nothing but look at me and begin to laugh, without uttering a word. Accordingly, I have made up my mind to scribble by myself while waiting for her to speak. You must know that she is wonderfully well, and—wait! she is beginning to speak. Not to waste time, let me tell you that when she breaks off I will continue on my own account, whereby I do not despair of making this letter intelligible to you.

SHE.—In truth, my dear guardian, I am growing more impatient every day at not seeing you. You fail me at a moment when my condition requires that I should be shut up.

I.—What cold commonplaces! Observe what follows; her style is getting warmer.

SHE.—I do not know whether it is because I should like to see you, but there are moments when all those about me are unendurable.

I.—A polite expression for the secretary to hear! Unen—durable. Next, madam?

SHE.—I am much better than I hoped to be.

I.—I have already told him that; go on to something else, cousin.

SHE.—You make me giddy with your nonsense. How do you think I can dictate if you keep talking?

I.—I see you have nothing to tell him that you have not already told him a hundred times over, except that the youngster is well, squalls unmercifully, and is in the country with his nurse, and that his father will soon be here.

SHE.—Excuse me, cousin. I am in the habit of giving him an account of everything I do, of the life I lead.

I.—Ah! how very interesting—the life of a woman in your condition! Don't you want to write four or five pages on so exciting a subject? Leave it to me; I will tell him all that in two words.

Monsieur, she pulls back her curtains every morning between eleven and twelve, after having slept ten hours. Her breakfast is brought to her quickly, otherwise she is in a frightful temper. She receives her father and mother, who think themselves only too happy when she vouchsafes them an attempt at a smile. When they bore her, she sulks or pretends to be asleep. Then they talk to her about her little one, tell her that he is charming, that he has the stomach-ache, that he takes his milk in a remarkably graceful manner. This makes her laugh or cry, according to the state of her feelings.

At three or four o'clock punctually Madame de Vignolles or myself come to keep her company. When she is out of sorts she wearies us greatly; but when she is cheerful she talks like an angel, as she is.

At eight o'clock she has supper, and then goes to sleep till the next day, when she begins the same life again. You see, Monsieur, that all this is not very interesting; but if I had not restrained her, she would have discovered the secret of spinning it out into a volume. As I

believe that you know more than is necessary about this subject, I shall be inexorable and not say a word more, except to assure you of my regard.

MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE LISIEUX.

I have only time to say one word to you, my dear guardian. My husband arrived yesterday evening. What a change in my feelings, in my condition! His impatience has brought him so soon, for I did not expect him for a week. His presence has banished all my trouble and all my uneasiness. He loves me; he assures me of it, and he seems sincere. I even see that he has thought a great deal about me while on circuit. He has made several purchases for me, about which he said nothing in his letters. Since his return he has loaded me with presents. Is that the conduct of a man who does not love? How many things has he said to me already which prove his confidence and his love!

I am most impatient to come and see you; but, although I am well, it is the proper thing not to leave the house for six weeks, and you know that all these matters, which are unimportant, even ridiculous, are systematically attended to in this world. Good-bye, then, my dear guardian. I leave you in a hurry, otherwise I should perhaps allow myself the pleasure of a chat with you. I have another still greater pleasure, which you will not be vexed that I prefer to your society — since my husband is waiting for me.

*From* M. DE LISIEUX *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

MY DEAR WARD,—The contents of your letter would be altogether pleasing to me, if I could feel assured that your present happiness is as firmly established as I wish. You inform me that M. d'Épinay has arrived; you abandon yourself to hopes of happiness which I think you ought to mistrust. Not that I wish in any way to disturb your satisfaction. I am your friend; I shall always be so; but, the greater my attachment to you, the more I should like to make your happiness secure and lasting. To succeed in this, it might be advisable to estimate things at their proper value. M. d'Épinay arrives some days sooner than you expected him; he shows you great attention; he bestows upon you quite ordinary marks of attention, by sharing with you what he brings home from his travels; then all changes to hope, even to reality, and there you have the clear proofs of his passion. Consider, I beg you, whether the satisfaction which fills your soul is not somewhat excessive. You claim that your husband should still be your lover; you are right; this claim is well founded in many respects. But he is young; he knows but little of the world; he is at an age when the passions are clamorous, and he has not yet had time to repent having satisfied them. You have hardly experienced anything of the troubles, pleasures, happiness, and vicissitudes to which you may be exposed; you believe yourself in port, my dear ward, when you are still in the

open sea. Even should you disapprove of what I say, I think this is a fitting moment to suggest to you an idea, which, if carried out, must influence your happiness.

In the midst of the pleasures into which I see you will be dragged, either from a wish to oblige your husband, or perhaps even from your own inclination, could you not devote a few moments to keeping a diary of your life, of the impressions produced upon your mind by the different situations in which you may find yourself, and, lastly, of the reflections which such an occupation cannot fail to give rise to in a mind like yours ?

This diary would become, in course of time, a mirror in which you would see yourself as you have been and as you may be. If such an examination would assist you to add a charm to your existence, would you be afraid to set the picture of it before your eyes ?

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE LISIEUX.

Oh, my dear guardian, what a letter was yours of yesterday ! How can I express to you all the feelings of my heart when I read it ? It is true that I also was in a singular frame of mind at the time. Indeed, words fail me. Why should you not know all ? But, not to mention that I myself do not know where to begin, there are certain things which I should like you to know without having heard them from me. This is one of the reasons which make me eagerly seize upon your idea of a diary. I think that I would rather let you read it than tell you its contents in writing.

You cannot believe how pleased I am to find that you advise me to adopt this plan, because I had often thought of it already; but I should never have ventured to carry it out: I should have been afraid of being taken for a mad woman if I were to write in this manner to myself. Well, then, I am going to begin. I am not quite sure whether I shall communicate it to you in its entirety; at any rate, I will pick out some fragments for you. I will say no more about your letter, my dear guardian; on this point I refer you to my diary; this will give you a better idea of the impression it has made upon me.

I have recently made two new acquaintances, Madame Darty[1] and M. de Francueil.[2] Madame Darty has a curious face, which for a long time prejudiced me against her; but as I have seen rather more of her this summer, and Madame de Maurepaire has spoken well of her, I have asked the former to bring her to my house, as the state of my health does not yet permit me to go out.

I leave you with regret; but I am going to begin my diary. I will date it from the first days of the week. I shall always speak to you in it, whether you see the whole of it or not; without that, what should I do? It seems to me that I cannot talk to myself alone in this manner.

[1] Natural daughter of Samuel Bernard. She was the mistress and, what was more, the friend, the only true friend, of the Prince de Conti.—*Confessions of Rousseau*, Book vii.

[2] Son of M. Dupin, brother-in-law to Madame Darty.

## MY DIARY.

*October 20th.*

I got up early, in the hope of seeing my husband sooner and having more time to talk to him; but I was deceived in my expectations, for he had so many visitors one after the other, that at twelve o'clock I had not yet seen him. At half-past, he came into my room with an air of impatience and eagerness which delighted me. He embraced me, and expressed great regret at having thus lost a morning. That is how my angel speaks of the time which he spends without seeing me. He told me that he was going out after dinner, and begged me not to keep anyone for the evening, because he wanted to have supper alone with me.

*October 21st.*

He came back as he had promised. After supper, we talked a good deal about his circuit. I wanted to tell him what suffering his absence had caused me; but he stopped my mouth with a kiss, saying, "Don't let us think any more about that, my little wife. I also truly have suffered greatly, but it is no use to speak of it now." It is a great pity that we think so differently about certain things. However, it is a very great pleasure, it seems to me, to remind of one's pains and pleasures him who has caused them.

*October 22nd.*

I breakfasted this morning with my husband. We talked about his affairs, which are somewhat in disorder. I asked him to repay me the balance of the money I had advanced him as soon as possible. He did not hold out much hope on this matter; he says he cannot conceive what I spend my money upon. It was useless for me to represent to him that, with 2000 livres per annum which he allows me, I could not play and defray my expenses. He declares that I have no idea of economy. I did not venture to tell him, for fear of annoying him, that I owed nearly 500 livres.

On leaving the table we went into the library. Having put all his music in order, he sat down, took me on his knees, and said, "Come, little wife, tell me all about what you have read while I was away." I frankly confessed to him that all the historical works which I had begun had so utterly wearied me that I could not finish them, with the exception of the "Memoirs of Cardinal de Retz;" that the romances had not interested me at all, except in passages where I came across situations similar to my own. "And in what romance," he asked, "did you find that?" I did not wish to answer him, for fear of being unjust, or of humiliating him too much, if my former apprehensions were well founded. But as he obliged me to answer, I said to him, "It was in the 'Confessions of the Comte de ——,'[1] when

[1] By Duclos, of whom we hear much later.

Madame de Selve sees plainly that the Comte is unfaithful, and, far from making any complaint, takes his part for some time against herself, and afterwards keeps her sorrow locked up in her heart." As I concluded, I embraced him with tears in my eyes. "Ah! upon my word," said he, laughing with all his might, "that is scarcely like you, for you are not sparing of your complaints." "I?" I rejoined, utterly astonished.

At this moment his letters were brought in. I put out my hand to the footman to take them and hand them to him; but he seized the parcel. At first, he opened one or two letters, which he merely glanced over and handed to me without looking at me, keeping his eyes fixed upon the address of a letter which he appeared to me to contemplate with great satisfaction.

"What do you wish me to do with these letters?" said I, taking them from him. "Read them if you like," he answered, "or, rather, keep them for me till I have read all the others." He broke the seal of the most important, or, at least, that which I considered so, according to my idea, and began to read it. After he had been reading for a moment, I asked him gently, "Am I to see all of them?" He smiled, and, as he kept on reading, I ventured to pick up the envelope, only to see—what? I know nothing about it. I merely saw that the postmark was ——. The writing seemed to me very large and the spelling bad. "A person cannot know very much who makes mistakes

in an address," I said loudly. My husband blushed. Why? On the contrary, as a rule, he laughs at me when I make such mistakes.

At last he finished reading, and did not give me the letter. He opened the others, looked through them in silence; then, stooping down and resting his hands on his knees, he turned to me with a yawn, and asked, "What did you say?" "That I have no longer any business here, and that I ought to have gone away when your letters were brought to you." I got up to go out; he pulled me back by my dress, and, making me sit down on his knees again, said, "Ah! now we have a little temper. Good!" he went on, in a tone of approval; "this is the first time I have seen any sign of it since I have been back. And why, may I ask, ought you to have gone away before? and why have you no longer any business here?" "Because—because——" I hardly knew what to answer. I knew well that I was out of temper, and that the letter was the cause of it. I sorely wanted to speak to him about it; but, I said to myself, if it was merely a business letter, my suspicion would offend him. I will not say anything about it for fear of hurting his feelings; and, in order to put him on the wrong scent, I forced a smile. "Ah!" said he, "you are laughing; at least, there are some hopes of anyone who can laugh. Come; it is this letter which worries you, isn't it?" "Yes, the letter with the bad spelling." "Well," said he, "if I get you to read it, what

will you say?" "That I am very unjust—that I will ask you to forgive me, if you will show it to me." "There you are," said he, holding it out as if to give it to me, and drawing it back immediately; "there it is, read it. But first I must tell you, or else you will understand nothing; it is from a woman of——"

While he was speaking I looked at him when he was not looking at me, for I was embarrassed by his confession, and cast down my eyes. He laughed heartily. I was obliged to smile, but my heart beat fast. I appreciated his frankness and confidence, and said to myself, Oh, if only I could become deaf and yet feel sure that he was concealing nothing from me, while at the same time believing that I heard him!

Then he said, "As for this woman—I really don't know why she fancied that I was in love with her. She has committed extravagances without number. Everyone used to laugh at her. I must confess that she has afforded us considerable amusement."

"Well?" said I, "this woman?" "Well, well! she was convinced that I only returned to Paris to make arrangements to settle altogether at ——. She used to make appointments with me. Sometimes I kept them; before that I used to make her believe that I could not. In short, she—she did not know that I was married. She is greatly distressed, because I have not been to see her; this is what she has written to me." Then he gave me the letter. I was dying to read

it, but I wanted to show him that I could be generous. I gave it back to him, saying, "No, your confidence is enough for me. I feel flattered by your frankness and politeness. You are thoughtless rather than guilty; but I think that you will return to ——; that, perhaps even before then—since you have once been able to make a joke of forgetting your wife. You have plenty of opportunities here. The Chevalier de Canaples will come back. This portrait about which there is reason——" "No, no, my dear friend," he interrupted, "you have really no idea of the world or its ways. What does all this matter? What is there in common between a creature who can be bought for money and a woman whom one esteems and has chosen?" Would you believe, my dear guardian, that, hurt as I felt by this way of arguing, I could at first only answer it by my tears. At last I said to him, "What! do you think that a heart which is entirely yours can put up with so despicable a share?" "But I am not speaking to you about myself. I tell you that, even though I were to do like everybody else, you ought not to worry yourself about it, because it would in no way diminish my affection for you. Has not little P—— a mistress? And yet he adores his wife; and is she not happy?" "They say so, but perhaps, if one were to ask her——" "Upon my word! should she complain, people would laugh in her face. What does she want then? Her husband never refuses her anything."

I was going to criticise severely this unworthy code of morality. I was indignant. He put his hand over my mouth. "Ah, well!" said he, preparing to go, "mere trifles. Don't let us say any more about it; I must go out. Good-bye, my dear; you may always feel sure that I love you better than any other woman." With these words he left me. I remained a few moments longer in the library, not knowing whether I was dreaming, or where I was, shedding tears freely. I am now nothing more than the woman whom he loves best!

I was roused from my reverie by the announcement of the arrival of M. de Francueil and his brother-in-law. This is the second time I have received the former. He appears to me very amiable, and he has the reputation of being so, but I fancy that I shall find it difficult to make myself agreeable to him. I think that he carries his head too high and uses too much powder. The conversation turned upon music, comedy, and the opera.

*November 9th.*

I have spent the afternoon at my convent, with Madame de Roncherolles. She complained of me. It is true that, since my husband's return, I have not been able to find a single moment to go and see her. She asked me, in her usual kind manner, to tell her about my domestic affairs. I concealed nothing from her, and I gave her a full account of the day in the library, in order to

prove to her that I really possessed my husband's entire confidence; "for," I said to her, "only esteem or confidence could make a man disclose such a secret to a woman who loves him." "Or lack of principle," rejoined Madame de Roncherolles. You can imagine, my dear guardian, what an impression this remark made upon me, and how deeply it affected me. However, I tried to deceive myself. I said to myself, Want of birth is so grave an offence in Madame de Roncherolles' eyes, that it may easily lead her to disapprove generally of all that my husband does. At least, I sorely need to console myself with this prejudice of hers, in order to destroy the impression which this observation produced upon me. "How I wish," she continued, "that I could see you cured of a passion which can never bring you happiness, owing to the difference in your dispositions! As long as it lasts, you will be exposed to the greatest unhappiness." "How so, Madame?" said I. "Because your husband, who no longer returns it, except from caprice or want of something to do, will leave you exposed to vexation, and vexation leads—in short, vexation, especially against a husband, is the greatest danger for a young and sensitive heart. Now is the time, my dear child, when you must be more careful than ever in the connections you form. Esteem often leads further than one thinks. At the present moment your heart is in a state of madness, and as long as your foolish passion lasts, nothing is to be expected of you; but take my advice, and get the only

benefit possible out of your passion. Devote it entirely to your child; look after him, think of him, make plans for this little one. That he is the image of his father, I admit, to please you; but, in everything else, make him a d'Esclavelles; from his infancy you must never forget that." I am to go with my mother to-morrow to see the dear child; my husband, who has not yet seen him since he has been out at nurse, cannot go with me. It must be something important that prevents him, for he was anxious to go. "Take my advice," said Madame de Roncherolles again, "avoid conversations such as you have had with your husband; it is all idle chatter. He wants to show himself off; nothing more. A woman is wanting in self-respect and loses her husband's regard, if she listens to such words from him when they are not dictated by repentance. Repentance is not acccompanied by such frivolity, and one ought not to lend one's ear in this manner to the language of vice."

*November* 10*th.*

How am I to calm my anxiety? What will become of me? It is nearly twelve o'clock, and my husband has not come home. I keep continually thinking of what took place between us before he left. Oh, how cruel life is!

This morning, at seven o'clock, my mother sent word to me that she was ready to start. While crossing the ante-room, I inquired whether

my husband were awake; I was told that he was not. There was a little shoeblack on the staircase who seemed to be waiting for him to be called. I thought of asking him what he wanted, but it is always distasteful to me to satisfy curiosity of this kind; so I passed by without speaking to him. I had no sooner arrived at my mother's than I found that I had forgotten a little present which I intended for the nurse, and I went upstairs again to fetch it. Seeing my husband's room open, I went in to give him a kiss before starting. At the door I cried out to him, "Good morning!" and, in the glass which overlooked the foot of his bed, I saw through the half-drawn curtains that he was reading a letter, which he thrust under his pillow with a movement of surprise, which clearly proved to me that he thought that I had started. "I beg your pardon," I said, "for having interrupted your reading; another time I will be more discreet." "Nonsense! what folly!" he rejoined; "I was not reading at all. What put that idea into your head?" I advanced a few steps towards his bed, and said, "Do you wish me to prove it to you?" "I do not recommend you to," he replied sharply. At these words I angrily turned my back upon him, and left the room.

When we were in the carriage, my mother, who saw that I seemed agitated and preoccupied, asked me what was the matter. I should have been glad to avoid answering, or, at least, to conceal my distress, but my tears betrayed me.

"Am I no longer your friend?" she said, pressing my hand. "You see, my child, the result of the dissipation into which your husband has dragged you since his return. You are no longer the same. Open your heart to me." "How can I make up my mind," I answered, "to break your heart by telling you of the thousand little daily troubles which will seem to you paltry, for which, I am afraid, there is no remedy so long as I remain so sensitive." "Emilie, my daughter, I beg you once again, open your heart to me." I could not resist such tenderness; I told her about the conversation in the library, and what had just occurred. "The mark of confidence which your husband showed you is a great happiness for you; preserve it most carefully; cast your troubles upon God, and meet the crosses which He sends you only with patience and firmness." My first impulse was a feeling of gladness that my mother considered his confidence a good sign; but then, the incident of the morning! "What then am I to think of this letter?" I rejoined. "It may be that you are mistaken, my daughter; you will only annoy your husband, and lose your influence with him by misplaced alarm." "I wish I could believe it, mamma; but, unfortunately, I have no doubt." "Possibly; but it was your own wish. The fancy which you had for each other before marriage made a stir. You must be silent. It is so great an advantage for you that your uncle overcame his dislike to your union with his son that you must preserve, by

your gentleness and patience, the good opinion that has been formed of you. Out of affection and regard for your father-in-law, you must spare him the knowledge of his son's irregularities. He is very young. Study his rational inclinations, follow them; firmly resist excessive dissipation." "But, mamma, allow me to tell you this advice is inconsistent." "My daughter, it is possible to be submissive, to give way in one's opinions, sometimes to sacrifice one's inclinations, and, nevertheless, to resist everything that involves the imputation of frivolity."

While I was writing this, my husband returned. "What!" said he carelessly, "not gone to bed yet? You must be tired." Somewhat astonished at his manner, I replied, "I wanted to tell you about my journey. I suppose you would like to hear." "Well, well," said he, embracing me; "how is our dear child?" "Wonderfully well," I answered. He appeared highly pleased with the account which I gave him of the amiable and touching qualities which I had observed in the little creature. He listened to me attentively, and asked me a thousand questions, which gave signs of interest. "Ah!" said I to myself, "why is he not always like this?" "Come now!" said he, after we had talked for half an hour on the same subject, "to reward you for bringing me such good news, I must show you the letter which gave you such a fright this morning." "No, no, Monsieur," said I, "I do not want any more confidences of that kind."

"Excuse me," he interrupted, "you shall see it. Perhaps it will teach you to suspend your false judgments; but only on condition that you show no more of this curiosity." "I! I have none, I assure you. Am I asking a question? Quite the contrary." "Not by your words, but by the alteration of your voice. Come now! I tell you it is a letter from Madame Darty inviting you to supper to-morrow. I am engaged myself; but you must go, and I will certainly come and fetch you. Well! don't you want to read it?"

In fact, I confess that, at first, I was afraid it was some trickery which would hurt me even more than what had taken place in the morning. At last, with a trembling hand, I took the letter. It was headed, "Six o'clock in the morning, on my return from the Prince de Conti's." Then my eyes filled with tears. I saw nothing; the paper fell from my hands; I flung my arms round his neck. "Will you be unjust to me again, dear Emilie?" he asked. "No, no, never, I swear it; but, why were you so frightened when I came in this morning?" "Ah! no more questions. Why? Well, really and truly, to try you; but I have told you everything; I won't answer any more."

Since night has left me time for reflection, alas! I do not know what to think. It must be confessed there is something underneath which does not seem to me natural. Perhaps I shall be enlightened only too soon!

*November 12th.*

Alas! the cruel scene which I have just gone through has informed me only too well. But let me proceed in order. I went to Madame Darty's at eight o'clock yesterday evening, in accordance with the invitation. When I arrived she said to me, "You started very early yesterday, my dear. My messenger, whom I had ordered to deliver my letter to you in your husband's absence, could not find you." I made no reply, not even venturing to ask when the messenger was sent, for fear of not being able to control my agitation.

The supper was noisy enough to prevent anyone taking notice of me, and lively enough for Madame Darty and another lady to arrange that we should all three go, without escort, to the Opera ball; for M. d'Épinay did not come as he had intended, and these ladies' husbands refused to accompany them. I did my best to excuse myself from making one of the party; I felt too upset. I would have given anything in the world to see M. d'Épinay at once, and to put him to shame. In fact, it was the hope of finding him at the ball that decided me to go. He was not there. You would hardly believe that I ended by becoming intoxicated with the gaiety, the noise, and the efforts which I made to overcome my melancholy reflections, and that I enjoyed myself. I was, I confess, more annoyed than grieved. There are moments like that, for which it is impossible to account, when the heart takes its

own course; but it is only for a short time; that is the mischief of it. To return to the ball. We remained there till four o'clock; we tormented Francœur. I had never seen him. Madame Darty, who knew him well, told us what to say. He kept my snuff-box, in order, as he said, to have an opportunity of paying his respects to me in person.

When I returned, M. d'Epinay was in bed and asleep. I did not see him at all this morning; after dinner he came to my room. "Still in bed!" he exclaimed; "what a pretty life! This Madame Darty will be the death of you." "No, no, *she* will not." "No? who will then?" I made no answer, and he immediately walked to my harpsichord, humming a tune. This idea of music occurred to him so suddenly that it was clear that he was afraid of an explanation. As this was what I wanted, I took up a book while he was playing, in order to reassure him and leave him to come back to me, as, in fact, he did, and sat down at the foot of my bed. Then I said to him, "Well, Monsieur, so that letter the other day came from Madame Darty?" "Certainly; if not, from whom was it, if you please?" "Ah! from I don't know whom; but certainly it was not from her." "Very well, Madame; that is a fitting answer to my folly in trying to calm a silly head which worries itself during the day with the dreams of the night." "My agitation must have shown you what it cost me to believe you guilty, but it is

unworthy on your part to abuse my credulity." "Eh! what nonsense is this? What! are there going to be fresh scenes every day? I told you and proved to you that the letter was from Madame Darty." "And I can prove to you, Monsieur, that it was not from her; for she told me positively that her footman had not been able to find me, and that I had already left the house." "Ah! excellent! the servant cannot have been mistaken. Since we thought you had started, he may very well have thought so too." "No; for if it had been he who was in your ante-room, he would have seen me go upstairs again. Then, again, the messenger who was waiting for an answer from you was a shoeblack, while Madame Darty sent her footman." "Her footman! Indeed, he has either lied about it or intrusted his commission to a shoeblack, since I saw him when I went out, and he gave the letter into my own hands." "But if he gave you the letter when you went out, it was not the one which you were reading in bed!" "Eh! what! such trifles take up a vast amount of room in women's heads which do not even enter ours. Since it is so, by heaven! I will not tell you another word about anything I do; make yourself easy about that, Madame. Good-bye." With these words he went out. Oh! my dear guardian, what am I to do? what will become of me? Will you still say that it is vanity?

*November 20th.*

We expect M. de Jully to-day; Madame Darty also is to come and spend the afternoon with me.

I do not know a woman more lively, more amiable, or one who has a more amusing turn of mind; it seems to me that she has as much friendship for me as I have for her. Madame la Marquise de Vignolles does not like her at all. She thinks she is too flighty. However, I know some features of her character, which prove that what is believed to be flightiness is often only liveliness; at least, she is not without good qualities: she is even capable of making courageous resolutions.

This does not prevent my relations regarding my intimacy with her with disapproval; no doubt, because they do not know her. If they knew the interest she takes in all that concerns me, how tenderly and feelingly she lets me see it, they would not speak of her as they do. She seems to me so thoroughly to be trusted, that I have confided to her all my past sorrows, with the less scruple because I have a ray of hope that I may never have to endure the like again. She has told me things which make me regret that I did not become intimate with her sooner. I should have taken her advice upon a matter in which she appears to have greater experience than myself; and, in all probability, my sorrows would not have lasted so long.

*November 22nd.*

Francœur came to bring back my snuff-box. He tried to banter me upon what I had said to him at the ball. I broke off the conversation. We sang a few airs; and he promised to give me some lessons in singing.

*Note from* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* MADAME DARTY.

I have been scolded, my queen, for having spent two days in succession at your house; therefore I do not venture to go and see you to-day. If you go out, pay me a call for a moment, as if by chance. No, don't come; that would only annoy my parents still more. I would rather be deprived of the pleasure of your society to-day, so as to enjoy it more at my ease to-morrow. Good-bye. I do not know how it is, but I can no longer do without you. If you see Francœur, tell him to come to see me.

*Answer from* MADAME DARTY.

Really, it is quite scandalous to see two women spend their day and evening together; in truth, your parents are fools. If they still persist in opposing our intimacy, I will take a room at the Capuchin convent;[1] I will look at you all day on your balcony; and, if they show their nose at the window, I will make a face at them to teach them manners. They have woke me to

[1] Madame d'Épinay lived in the Rue St. Honoré, opposite this convent.

give me your letter, and I have only one eye open, I should say half open, as yet. My finger-tips are frozen, but I feel it no further when you are concerned. Good-bye, my pretty one; although you forbid it, I do not answer for it that I shall not see you at all to-day. I do not feel in the humour to submit to this penance, and you will not be less scolded for one visit more or less. Francœur is coming to dinner with me; I will send him to you afterwards.

CONTINUATION OF THE DIARY.

Even if I had not been informed of the arrival of the Chevalier de Canaples, I should have guessed it from M. d'Épinay's irregularities. I have hardly seen him for a fortnight. He scarcely ever sups at home; and whenever I have seen him at the theatre, he has always been on the stage[1] with the Chevalier, who, as I am given to understand, although not in so many words, is commonly reputed to be in love with me. I have also heard that he has ruined the reputation of several women, without their having deserved it, simply by his manner of talking and his silly conceit.

At last I determined to have some conversation with my husband on this subject, and this morning I had the good luck to get him to give me an hour's interview.

"Nonsense!" he replied, "mere trifles! I know all about that. There are some women whom one

[1] At this time it was quite common for a number of spectators to stand at the back of the stage.

cannot fail to treat with respect. You will see whether those of whom the Chevalier has spoken would not have been ruined without him." "In any case," I rejoined, "I declare to you that from to-day my door will always be shut against him." I insisted so strongly upon my determination that at last, as a compromise, he agreed that I should gradually give up seeing him, on condition that I took every precaution to prevent anyone observing my intention, or suspecting that he had had anything to do with it. I gave him my promise; but I shall curtail these formalities considerably. In the middle of breakfast, his *valet de chambre* came to tell him that his chair was ready. As he had not told me that he meant to be away, I asked him uneasily where he was going. He replied, in a tone which clearly showed me that he did not want to be questioned, that he was going to Versailles, and that he would be back in the evening, or, at the latest, to-morrow morning. But I soon knew more about it than I wanted, for the Chevalier came in, quite surprised to find that he was not yet ready. Some words which passed between them convinced me that they were going together, and that the excursion had been arranged some time before. I felt so angry with the Chevalier that I went abruptly to my dressing-room, as much to avoid him as to conceal the tears which fell from my eyes. The moment after, I made up my mind to go back to my room, hoping, I do not know why, that I should be able to keep my husband back; but they were already

gone. Is it possible that women have no other resource or consolation but tears? Why then have power and authority been placed in the hands of those who have least need of support?

*Letter to* M. DE LISIEUX.

*December 9th.*

Where am I? where am I? O heavens! I am dying of grief, of shame, of vexation! What humiliation! Is it possible that a man can have so little respect for himself as to expose his wife? I spent yesterday in a state of most violent agitation. The expedition to Versailles made me very uneasy. But I must finish! You must know then, my dear guardian, since I am obliged to bring up the disgraceful scene, that, after having been all day in a state of uncertainty as to the course I ought to take, I felt so unwell that I went to bed about nine o'clock in the evening. At the end of an hour or two, I was awoke by my bed-curtains being roughly pulled back by my husband, who was accompanied by the Chevalier. "Monsieur," I said to him, "who has allowed you to enter my room? Hélène! Hélène! have I not told you to allow no one to come in when I am in bed? Please retire." "Madame, your maid is asleep," said M. d'Épinay, drawing my curtain again. "I am sorry for having disturbed your rest. It is strange, however—— You will agree that it is not usual—— One does not expect—— Chevalier, what are we to do? We must have

a morsel of something to eat." "Nothing is easier, it seems to me," said the latter; "you have only to order something to be brought to us." "Of course," replied my husband. "Hélène! wake up and tell them to bring us something for supper." "What, Monsieur!" I cried; "here! You cannot mean it." "Would you like me to wake my father then? I can't move at home without his hearing it. We will not disturb you for long, Madame. Besides, there is no fire in my room, and we are half-frozen." "And we have eaten nothing all day," added the Chevalier.

The necessity of enduring this disgraceful scene crowned my sorrow. I called Hélène and ordered her to remain by my bedside. I then flung the bedclothes over my head and burst into tears. I heard the Chevalier talking and laughing, but I could not make out anything they said. However, I understood, from a few words uttered a little louder than the rest, that my husband was somewhat embarrassed; that the Chevalier was rallying him upon it, and congratulating him upon his happiness. The affected manner in which he raised his voice, when repeating the dull and insipid praises which he lavished upon me, proved to me that he hoped I should not lose a word. Their supper was brought. Twenty times I was tempted to ask M. d'Épinay again to retire. I sat up, and then lay down again. At last I came to the conclusion that it was better to pretend not to hear them; besides, I felt sure that my request would

not be listened to. During dessert they sent the servants away, and the Chevalier asked for a bottle of champagne. My husband ordered one to be brought, together with a bottle of Lunel. I shuddered, when it suddenly occurred to me that they might get drunk. I was sure that they were still sober, for neither of them had said anything while the servants were present. I seized the opportunity to call M. d'Épinay. He came to my bedside. "Monsieur," I whispered to him, "that is enough. I beg you, go and finish your supper in your room; the fire can be lighted." "It is not worth while," he answered; "we should disturb my father. We shall have finished directly." He wanted to take my hand, but I repulsed him roughly. He drew the curtain and retired. I soon perceived a design on the Chevalier's part to make my husband drunk. I was seized with anger and alarm. I rang all my bells, and hastily drew back my curtain. "Messieurs," I said firmly, "leave my room at once. Hélène, go immediately and wake my mother and M. de Bellegarde. Ask them, from me, to come up directly." The tone in which I spoke awed them. M. d'Épinay got up unsteadily and whispered to the Chevalier, "She is angry; we had better go." "What!" said the Chevalier, "without saying good-night to her," taking him by the arm and shoving him towards my bed. "Don't come any closer, Monsieur," I cried; "if one of you dares to come near, I cannot answer for it how far my anger may go."

Then I rang again, and the servants came in. M. d'Épinay withdrew, repeating, "I tell you she is angry; you won't believe me. You have only to come back to-morrow." You may judge of the condition their heads were in. The entrance of the servants decided them to leave the room, after which I had my door double-locked. It is seven o'clock, and I am still trembling all over. As things are, how can I look these two men in the face? Is there no longer such a thing as manners? What! has a man no respect even for his wife? Ah! if unfortunately they had been more polite on their first appearance, if I had not been distrustful, if I had gone to sleep! My dear guardian, in truth my head is wandering. What did they go to Versailles for? My imagination must be fearfully heated beforehand, or is it habitual disorder? I have no longer strength to write.

*Evening.*

My husband came into my room in the course of the morning, and threw himself at my feet, begging me to forget his indiscretion. "Your indiscretion!" I said. "Monsieur, you use a very moderate term to describe your offence. You have offered me the most cruel insult that a woman can ever suffer. It has filled my heart with bitterness; it is blighted for ever, since I see to what kind of man I have the misfortune to be united. It is all over, Monsieur; we have no longer anything to discuss; all connection between us is broken off." In truth, my dear

guardian, I thought, and still think so; the illusion is completely destroyed, the bandage is torn from my eyes. Such is the effect produced in my mind by this wretched night.

How unhappy I am! My husband is greatly distressed; he has left me free to refuse to see the Chevalier, and the only favour he has asked is that I will say nothing to our parents about the incident. I found it very hard to consent. At last, however, I gave way to his assurances that he would in future behave so as to restore my confidence in his principles, and I promised to hold my tongue. But—how little he understands how deeply he has wounded my heart! I do not know when I shall be able to see you. I shall be obliged to keep my room for a few days. M. de Bellegarde overwhelms me with kindness. If my happiness depended upon him, I could almost believe I was happy. But it depends upon someone who has shown himself unworthy. How greatly am I to be pitied!

## CHAPTER III.

(1747-1749).

*February 26th*, 1747.[1]

I HAVE just been guilty of a great folly—yes, very great, since it makes me appear most guilty; but in this case appearances are deceptive. Ought not that to be sufficient to calm me? And yet my conscience is not easy. I have been obliged to implore my husband's forbearance. His forbearance! while our relations are such as they are. I tremble for fear lest anyone should hear of my foolish behaviour. O heavens! no, I cannot paint it too black, that so it may frighten me from ever venturing to do the like again.

Yesterday M. de Jully and myself went to spend the afternoon and take supper at Madame Darty's. Francœur was expected there. We were to have some music and perform an interlude which he has just finished. We were enjoying ourselves thoroughly. At eight o'clock, as Francœur had not arrived, Madame Darty sent a message to him to ask the reason. He returned the answer that he had a very bad cold, and could not possibly go out. We were

[1] Or 1748.

all three greatly annoyed. My brother said it was merely an excuse. Madame Darty was downright angry, and declared that he should repent having broken his word to her. I sulked without saying anything, and I certainly was not the one who was least annoyed. My brother offered to go and see if Francœur was really ill. All at once Madame Darty said, "No; let us all three go there to supper." At first I felt shocked by this proposal, which, however, I only took as a joke. When I saw that it was seriously meant, I remonstrated; but she shut my mouth by saying that if I went with my brother-in-law and another woman it would be quite harmless. Then I mentioned my husband, my mother, and my father-in-law. What would they think if they came to hear of it? "Nonsense!" said Madame Darty, "my husband, my father, my mother—are you not afraid of your grandfather returning from the other world to lecture you? Come, come, don't behave like a child. If your parents scold you, you need only send for me, I will bring them to their senses. Your husband! Your husband knows a trick or two; and then, have you not got your brother-in-law to take your part?" "Of course," answered de Jully; "come, and leave it to us." It was arranged that my brother-in-law's carriage should stop at the garden of the Palais Royal, where there is a little gate leading to Francœur's, and that we should return to Madame Darty's house in a sedan-chair.

I had told my coachman to fetch me at twelve o'clock, and having once made up my mind, I endeavoured to stifle my scruples; but I was not entirely successful, and I laughed with clenched teeth. We reached the Palais Royal. We could not see our hands before our face: we had a lantern to light us. I was half dead with cold and fright: every tree seemed to rebuke me. Madame Darty was in fits of laughter, and, it seems to me, found the secret of persuading me that I had never been so amused in my life. We arrived at Francœur's: I thought he was as much astonished to see us as I was to find myself in his house. "You are great fools," he said to us. Madame Darty began to laugh still louder, and so did I, although at first the expression had shocked me. Francœur, looking at me and perceiving my embarrassment—for, to tell the truth, my attempts to laugh and appear at my ease were very awkward—said to me in a low tone, "I see that it is not to you that I am indebted for my good fortune." These words enlightened me as to what was passing in my mind. I felt more independent, and I then perceived that the fear of losing his esteem had had a great deal to do with my embarrassment. While I was talking, Madame Darty and my brother-in-law were turning over all the sheets of music and other papers which she found within reach. Francœur was more respectful in his manner than I had ever seen him, no doubt out of compassion for me. To-day it seems to me that I hardly deserved

it; yesterday, I was grateful to him for it: grateful to Francœur for his respect and compassion for me! Now that I can reflect calmly, it seems to me that the whole evening was very dull. We returned at twelve o'clock, as we had arranged, to Madame Darty's. I thought I should have fallen to the ground when her footman told me that M. d'Épinay had called for me more than half an hour ago, and had seemed much surprised at not finding me. Madame Darty asked if he had been told where we were. He replied that he had only been informed that we had all three gone out at eight o'clock. We sent away the footman, and took counsel what I should say. My brother-in-law and myself thought it would be best to tell him everything. Madame Darty maintained that there were great objections to that; that my husband would make it an excuse to tyrannise over me; that the party, although it was quite harmless, would be misconstrued by my parents; that even if he said nothing about it, he would have plenty of opportunities of making me appreciate his kindness in not having informed them; and that it was far better to say that I had been to supper at the Luxembourg, with Madame Darty's aunt. I yielded to these arguments, more from anxiety to get home again and to hear what my husband would say to me, than because I felt convinced by them. On the way, I was greatly distressed. I represented to my brother-in-law that, if my husband came to hear the truth, my offence would appear

much greater. He tried to reassure me, and declared that the last plan which we had decided upon was the only one that ought to be adopted. I believed him.

While I was going upstairs my heart beat violently, and I could hardly speak. On crossing the ante-room, I saw that the door of my husband's room, in which there was no light, was open. I began to fear that he had not returned home and had followed me. I did not dare to ask any questions. I went into my apartments, and found him asleep in an easy chair by the fire. I wanted to wake him; my brother-in-law objected. At last I went up to him with this intention, but he awoke of his own accord, and appeared greatly surprised to see us both. My brother-in-law began to laugh, and I did my best to follow his example. "Where have you had your supper?" he said to us, without looking at me. "At—at—" I stammered. My brother-in-law finished by stuttering, "The —the Luxembourg." "At the Luxembourg?" "Yes," I said, blowing my nose; "at the Luxembourg, at Madame de Ph——'s." "You are mistaken in the garden," he said to me drily; "wasn't it the Palais Royal?" My brother began a sentence which he was unable to bring out, and I began two or three which I had not the courage to finish. I longed for De Jully to go away that I might explain and confess the truth to my husband. He began to laugh at his brother's stammering, and said to him, "Have

you forgotten that last year, when you went to supper with a certain young lady, whom my father had forbidden you to visit, I guessed it all the same, by the way in which you answered his questions?" Then he dismissed him, thank-him him drily and ironically for the care he had taken of me, and ordered me to send away my maid that we might talk freely. When we were alone, he said, "Tell me, Madame, what kind of party have you had this evening? Do not conceal anything from me; nothing but the truth can save you from my resentment." "Alas!" I said, "you need no threats to make me speak; I do not want to conceal anything from you. If I had followed my own inclinations—— This party was very harmless." "Very harmless!" he rejoined. "By Jove! I didn't think you were so seasoned. Very harmless!" he added angrily. "Yes, very harmless," I replied; "if you will listen to me." "You don't mean to tell me all then?" "Pardon me." "Let us see then; but take care what you say; I know everything." "O heavens!" I replied, "am I not enough to be pitied? Do not threaten me; you upset me. Listen to me."

I told him the exact truth about all that had taken place. I only suppressed Francœur's remark upon my embarrassment and his pity for me. Pity indeed! My God! how I wish that I could efface this word from my memory, as well as the impression it makes upon me. "Listen to Madame," he repeated, walking up and down

in a furious manner; "to Madame, who gets into a fearful rage because her husband sups away from home in better company than hers; because he receives letters from his lady friend, which he does not care to show her; who wants to get a divorce because he is so indiscreet as to draw back her bed-curtains; and who goes to a gay supper on the sly at the house of a musician —a man who is only too intimate with ladies of the town."

During this outburst I remained dumb, although I fully felt the absurdity of the comparison; but I was wrong, and I do not know how to act when I am wrong. After this he asked me a number of questions, declaring that he could not help believing that the party had been arranged long beforehand. However, he saw clearly that I was not as guilty as he had at first believed; but he made it clear to me that this indiscretion was enough by itself to ruin my reputation. I quite felt this and admitted it in all sincerity. He said that many others in his place would not believe me on my word of honour. These words irritated me, but I swallowed my resentment in the hope of sooner putting an end to my humiliation. It is not true, as Madame Darty says—I see it clearly—that our conduct is a matter of indifference when the heart is innocent. It is not so; indiscretion exposes us to insulting suspicions, which it is not in our power to check or destroy. We must be satisfied with ourselves, to be above the reach of suspicion; and is this

possible, when we have committed a rash act, much less, when it is improper? My husband has forgiven me on condition—forgiven me on condition! That is really too strong. Well, he has forgiven me, on condition that I gradually drop Madame Darty's and Francœur's acquaintance. I had certainly thought of this myself before he demanded it; but I did not even take the trouble to tell him. I merely promised him to do all that he prescribed. How a mistake deprives us of the courage to show our good impulses! How small I feel at this moment! How infatuated I was with Madame Darty only a few days ago! I thought her an oracle; the turn of her mind delighted me; her witticisms seemed to me charming in their simplicity, and in my eyes created the impression of genuine gaiety; now they seem to me merely very free and even indecent. I want to avoid this woman, and I do not know how to set about it. She is so fond of me! Suppose I were to give her some advice about her thoughtless behaviour? She would be sure to laugh at me. She might, perhaps, have listened to me before, but now—I must drop her acquaintance gradually, as my husband has advised me.

I have had a number of visitors to-day, and I must have appeared very sulky. I was uneasy, and I fancied that the men all assumed a freer tone with me than usual. Could I have allowed them to take this tone insensibly during my infatuation without perceiving it? If this is so, what a long journey I have before me to get back

to the place whence I started! I am frightened at the idea. I am no longer surprised that the Chevalier de Canaples ventured to come into my bedroom with my husband at twelve o'clock at night.

This afternoon M. d'Épinay came into my room, and found me crying. He wanted to know the reason. I told him that the remembrance of the folly of which I had been guilty was partly the reason, but I did not confess to him that I felt wounded in my vanity, and that this also was one of the causes of my grief. He was very affectionate, and assured me that I should soon regain his confidence entirely, so convinced was he that I had been nothing more than indiscreet. "You must amuse yourself," he added; "see the world, go to the theatre, keep up your acquaintances; in short, live like other women of your age; that is the only way to please me, my love. Besides, our parents will not live for ever; when they are gone, I intend to have a house. Above all, take care not to let Madame Darty think that I am jealous, or that I tyrannize over you. If she once got this idea into her head, there would be no sort of ill-natured stories that she would not spread."

*March 2nd.*

M. d'Épinay introduced me to-day to Mademoiselle d'Ette, who is coming to settle in Paris. He made her acquaintance during his last circuit; she was at the house of an uncle on whom she was

attending. She lives at the Filles Saint-Thomas.[1] Her face pleased me; she must have been very pretty. She is thirty-three years of age, tall, and of good figure; she seems to be witty and clever. Her manner is awkward; I think she is shy. I spent an hour with her; I intend to cultivate her acquaintance; she quite pleases me.

*March 8th.*

I have never before been so gay as during the last month, and yet I find I am no happier for it; on the contrary, when I am alone, I feel weary and begin to cry. No one comes to see me, because I am never to be found at home. It was to oblige M. d'Épinay that I plunged into society; now I give myself up to it from necessity. I can no longer endure to be by myself, and I cannot think of my husband, because his conduct makes my heart bleed. I have heard rumours of a Mademoiselle Rose, a dancer at the Comedy, at whose heels he is always dangling. Hitherto I have refused to believe it, so painful is it to me to judge him guilty.

Mimi[2] is going to be married; it is all settled. Her future husband is M. le Comte d'Houdetot, a young man of position, but without fortune; he is twenty-two years of age, a professional gambler, as ugly as the devil, and not very high in the service; in a word, he is quite unknown, and, to

[1] The convent of the Filles de Saint-Thomas d'Aquin.
[2] Mademoiselle de Bellegarde.

all appearance, destined to be so. But the circumstances connected with this affair are too singular, too utterly incredible, not to deserve a place in this diary. I could not help laughing at it, if I were not afraid that the result of this ridiculous story will be to make my poor Mimi unhappy. Her soul is so beautiful, so frank, so honourable, so sensitive—it is this which comforts me; a man must needs be a monster to make up his mind to torment her.

Yesterday morning, Wednesday, my mother called me into her room and said to me, "Old M. de Rinville has just proposed to M. de Bellegarde a marriage for Mimi with one of his great-grandsons, who is said to be a very good fellow. But your father," she added, "is before all anxious that the young man should please his daughter, and we are going to-day to dine with Madame de Rinville. M. d'Houdetot will be there, but, nevertheless, nothing is to be said about it. He did not even wish to mention it to his daughter, but, as she never pays attention to anyone, unless she feels interested in him, it is quite likely that she would not even look at the Comte d'Houdetot, unless she were warned beforehand. I have therefore persuaded M. de Bellegarde to give her a hint. No further arrangements have yet been made; we want fuller particulars, although we have already heard a favourable account of M. d'Houdetot. Arrangements will afterwards be made about the dowry."

To cut this incredible story short: we all went

to dinner at Madame de Rinville's. On entering, we found a regular family party : M. and Madame d'Houdetot, their son, and all the Rinvilles possible. The Marquise d'Houdetot hastily got up when we arrived, and came forward with open arms to embrace my father-in-law, my mother, Mimi, and myself, whom she had never seen. After this process had been gone through, old M. Rinville took my father-in-law by the hand and formally introduced him to Madame d'Houdetot, who in turn presented to him her son and her husband ; and we were all introduced over again and duly embraced. The Marquise is a woman of middle height ; she seems to be at least fifty years of age. Her skin is still extremely beautiful, although she is very thin and pale. Her eyes are full of fire and intelligence ; all her movements are hasty and violent ; but, in spite of her liveliness, it is easy to see that she does nothing without an aim and purpose. Her gestures form the chief part of her conversation ; her eyes roam about as much from curiosity as from vanity. Her husband may be about twenty years older. He is an old soldier, not unlike the king of spades in figure and general get-up. When seated, he is fond of leaning his head and hands upon his stick, which gives him an air of thoughtfulness and meditation which, upon my word, does him credit. He repeats the last words of all that his wife says, grins, and shows teeth which one would like in proportion as he kept them hidden.

Madame d'Houdetot made my sister sit down by her side, questioned her, interrupted her, complimented her, and in less than two minutes was delighted with her charms and intelligence. The young people were placed close to each other at table. M. de Rinville and Madame la Marquise d'Houdetot took possession of my father-in-law, and my mother was placed between my sister-in-law, from whom she did not wish to be separated, and the Marquis d'Houdetot. At dessert the conversation had already turned openly upon marriage, in spite of the silence which had been enjoined upon us on this point. When we returned to the drawing-room, after we had had coffee and the servants had left the room, all at once M. de Rinville, turning to my father-in-law, said, "Now, my friend, we are all *en famille* here. Between sincere friends like ourselves there need not be so much mystery; let us discuss the matter openly. It is only a question of yes or no. Does my son suit you? Yes or no. Does he suit your daughter? Yes or no likewise; that's the point. I look upon your children as my own, my friends. I say then, Madame la Marquise" (here he turned round to her) "is very pleased with your daughter, my dear fellow; I see it. Our young Count is already in love with her; it only rests with your daughter to consider whether he is distasteful to her; let her say so. Speak, my god-daughter." My sister blushed. They overwhelmed her with compliments, and her father with flattery; in fact, they

did all that was calculated to turn all our heads and deprive us of time for reflection.

My mother, who saw that my father-in-law's blind confidence in M. de Rinville was likely to make him consent to everything, interrupted the chorus of approval, and said to Madame de Rinville, loud enough to be heard, "It seems to me, Madame, that M. de Rinville is going a little too fast; matters are not yet sufficiently advanced for our young people to express an opinion. If, in the hope of marrying, they should conceive an inclination for each other, and the affair were to fall through——" "Ah! you are right," cried M. de Rinville, lifting up his hands and clapping them. "Long live prudent counsellors!" he continued, pretending to interpret my mother's remarks according to his own idea. "It is better to discuss the matter of settlement first, and, in the meantime, the young people can talk together—that is a very sensible remark, a very sensible remark." With these words he took the old Marquis and his wife by the hand, and led them to a seat near my mother and father-in-law, in the meantime crying out, as he laughed and turned his head round in the endeavour to look at us, "Amuse yourselves, my children, enjoy yourselves; we are going to see about the means of making you happy soon."

When they were seated, M. de Rinville announced that the Marquis d'Houdetot was prepared to give his son, on his marriage, a safe

income of 18,000 livres from estates in Normandy, and the commission in the cavalry which he had purchased for him the year before. The Marquis, leaning on his stick in the manner I have described, agreed to everything he said, and the Marquise, looking eagerly at my mother and my father-in-law, said, "As for me, I know nothing about business; I will give all that I am able to give; my diamonds especially, Monsieur, my diamonds; they are beautiful. I do not exactly know how much they are worth, but all I have I give to my daughter-in-law, not to my son, at any rate." "There, my dear fellow," said M. de Rinville emphatically to M. de Bellegarde, whom he then asked if he were satisfied with these proposals, "that is really most handsome behaviour and a generous present." My father-in-law said that he was satisfied, but that his object was, above all, the happiness of his daughter.

He was interrupted by the praises of the young Count, and M. de Rinville answered for his god-daughter as for himself. M. de Bellegarde then said that he would treat his daughter like his other children, and would give her a dowry of 300,000 livres, and her share of his inheritance. "Ah!" said M. de Rinville, getting up, "now we are all agreed. I now ask that the contract be signed by us this evening; we will have the banns published on Sunday; we will get a special license, and the marriage shall take place on Monday."

All the D'Houdetot family and their agents

supported this; my mother strongly opposed it, as did M. de Bellegarde, who had not yet broached the subject to the members of his family; besides, he desired that they should be present at the signing of the contract. My mother further objected that this left no time for making preparations, and that this haste would not allow the young people time to understand each other, or to make up their minds whether they were suited for one another. M. de Rinville devoted himself to combating the first difficulty, and said nothing about the second, being well aware that it was unanswerable. He said to M. de Bellegarde, "You will be exposed to all the gossip of society if you put off the affair; it cannot be kept secret. Besides, you know how undecided your brother is; he will not leave you in peace for a moment. Come, there is still time to call on the notary to give him the rough draft of the contract. While he is drawing it up, we will go and inform all your family of the marriage, and then we will drop in at your house again, and sign. As for the preparations for the wedding, none are necessary; no noise, no show; so much the better, and so much money saved." You know M. de Bellegarde well enough, my dear guardian, to guess that he readily yielded to all these mischievous arguments; they gratified his fondness for peace and quietness too much for him not to be led astray by them. My mother, however, drew him aside and begged him to suspend his judgment; but the only answer she

could get from him was, "Well, well, sister; that is just like you; one would think you believe that M. de Rinville is trying to take me in. No, no; I should be ashamed to hesitate for a moment to follow his advice." The eyes of this worthy father sparkled with joy; the next moment he went out with M. de Rinville to complete the projected arrangement.

I pass on to the moment when we were all assembled together for the signature of the contract. Nothing could have been more amusing to see than the look of astonishment upon the faces of the members of these two families, who were only very slightly acquainted. There was an air of reserve, mistrust, and uneasiness about them which gave each the appearance of stupidity. While the contract was being read, the Marquise drew from her pocket two cases of diamonds, which she handed to her step-daughter as a wedding present. Their value was not stated in the contract, as there had not been time to get them valued. Everybody signed; then we sat down to table, and the wedding day was fixed for the following Monday.

Madame Darty came to see me this morning. She told me that the Marquise d'Houdetot is a professional gambler, as well as the Count her son; that their house is a thoroughly Bohemian one. In short, she told me enough to make me fear that my poor Mimi will be unhappy. I had the boldness to tell my father-in-law, but I was obliged to quote my authority. "Woman's gossip!" he answered. This marriage will for some time pre-

vent me from seeing Mademoiselle d'Ette as often as I should wish, but I intend to make up for it afterwards; fortunately, she is a great favourite of my relatives.

*May 7th*, 1748.

It took place yesterday—this marriage. I was with Mimi this morning while she was dressing. She was very melancholy and wept freely. She entreated me to go and see her every day; I shall not fail to do so. I feel only too strongly how much she must need me, in the first days of her marriage, especially a marriage like hers.

*June 7th*, 1748.

My husband has just started on his circuit. His departure, far from grieving me as before, has, I am not afraid to confess it, caused me a kind of pleasure. I am going to Épinay this evening; I shall be there alone for some days at least; I shall there enjoy peacefully the tranquillity which I have lost since I have come to know myself. I find that I am in a manner ashamed of being made happy by my husband's absence. Hitherto, when he left, I used to seek my friends and tell them to console me. Now I avoid them, and I am afraid they may see that I have no need of their assistance. No one holds his place in my heart, and no one will ever be able to occupy it. While regarding him with indifference, I have done nothing but what he has seemed to desire himself, to judge from his behaviour towards

me. I have neglected nothing that might bring him back to me; it has cost me many tears to reach the point at which I am at present. Shall I then proceed, by continued reflections, to disturb the first moment of tranquillity which shines upon me?

My son is with me; I think of nothing but this little creature from morning till evening. He is like his father, my dear guardian, and yet he is not like him. It is his face, and he also has a delicate, even touching, smile, and a passion—yes, that is just the word—a passion for having me always near him. He cries when I leave him. He is already afraid of me, and I am not sorry for it, for I do not want to spoil him. I sometimes think, when he smiles as he looks at me, and shows his delight at seeing me by clapping his little hands, that there is no satisfaction equal to that of making one's fellow-creatures happy.

*September 8th,* 1748.

It is three months since I have written anything in my diary, more from apathy and the indifference I feel about myself than from want of matter. I mean for the future to force myself to keep it regularly.

Mademoiselle d'Ette came to spend the day with me. After dinner I lay down on the couch. I felt oppressed and weary; I yawned every moment, and, being afraid that she might imagine that her presence was tiresome or disagreeable

to me, I pretended to want to go to sleep, hoping to shake off this feeling. But no, it only increased; melancholy took possession of me, and I felt obliged to say that I was sad. Tears came into my eyes; I could stand it no longer.

"I beg your pardon," I said to her; "I think I must be hysterical; I feel very unwell." "Don't disturb yourself," she replied; "you are certainly hysterical, and not to-day for the first time; but I did not like to say anything to you about it; I should only have increased your complaint." After a little lecture upon hysterics and their effect, she said, "Let us examine the cause of yours. Come! be honest, conceal nothing from me; it is simply weariness, nothing else." "I should be inclined to believe it," I answered, "if I had only had this feeling since my child was born, or since I left the country just before then. The lonely life I lead, when all my friends are absent, my utter inability to give my attention to anything, might certainly make me feel weary, and be the cause of the depression which has taken hold of me; but it was the same at Épinay, even during the time that you spent with me there. The moments when I seemed to enjoy your conversation most were sometimes those——" "Yes," she interrupted, "those when you felt most unhappy. This only confirms me in what I say; it is weariness of heart, not of mind, which I suspect in your case." Finding that I made no reply, she added, "Yes, your heart is lonely; it no longer

cares for anything; you no longer love your husband, and you cannot love him." I attempted to make a movement of dissent, but she continued in a tone that awed me, "No, you cannot love him, for you no longer respect him." I felt relieved that she had said the word which I did not venture to utter. I burst into tears. "Weep your fill," she said, clasping me in her arms; "tell me all that is going on in this pretty head. I am your friend, and will be so all my life; hide nothing from me of all that you have in your heart. May I only have the happiness of consoling you! But, above all, let me know what you think, and what is your idea of your position." "Alas!" I replied, "I do not even know myself what I think. I long since believed that I had lost my affection for M. d'Épinay; his behaviour has made it possible for me to confess that I no longer love him. I have almost forgotten him, and yet, when I think of it, I always shed tears. If you know any way of getting me out of this situation, tell me of it; I put myself in your hands unreservedly. But, one of the most surprising inconsistencies of my mind is, that I dread his return, and that I sometimes feel so strong a repugnance to seeing him again, that it seems to me as if I could not be different if I hated him.

"Ah, yes!" replied Mademoiselle d'Ette laughing, "our hatred is only proportionate to our love. Your hate is nothing but humiliated and revolted love; you will never be cured of this fatal complaint until you fix your affections

upon some other object more worthy of you." "Never, never!" I cried, drawing myself away from her arms, as if I was afraid of seeing her opinion confirmed; "I will never love anyone but M. d'Épinay." "You will love others," she said, still holding me in her arms, "and you will do rightly; only find persons sufficiently agreeable to please you." "In the first place," I said, "that is just what I shall never find. I swear to you in all sincerity that, since I have mixed in society, I have never seen any man except my husband who appeared to me worthy of notice." "I quite believe it," she replied; "you have never known anyone except old twaddlers or coxcombs; it is not at all surprising that none of them has been able to please you. Amongst all the visitors to your house, I do not know a single being who is capable of making a sensible woman happy. What I should like is a man of thirty years of age, rational, and competent to give you advice and guide you; a man who would feel sufficient affection for you to think only of making you happy." "Yes," I replied, "that would be delightful; but where is such a man to be found, intelligent and agreeable, in fact, such a one as you have just described, who would sacrifice himself for a woman, and remain satisfied with being her friend, without pushing his pretensions so far as to desire to be her lover?" "I do not say that either," replied Mademoiselle d'Ette; "I certainly intend him to be your lover."

My first impulse was to be shocked; my

second, a feeling of satisfaction that an unmarried woman of good reputation, like Mademoiselle d'Ette, could imagine that a woman could have a lover without being guilty of a crime. Not that I felt any inclination to follow her advice; quite the contrary; but at least I need no longer show myself so grieved at my husband's indifference in her presence, for I am sometimes afraid that the world considers it a crime on my part that I am not unhappy enough. I am sure that my mother has the same fear, although she has never told me so plainly.

"Oh!" I said, "I will never have a lover." "And why so? from religious scruples?" "No; but I do not think that a husband's offences justify a woman in misconducting herself." "What do you call misconduct? I am not proposing to you to advertise your lover to all the world, or to have him always at your heels; on the contrary, he must be the man of all others who is least seen with you in public. I want no appointments, no confidences, no letters, no notes; in a word, none of those insipidities which only cause slight satisfaction and expose a woman to a thousand annoyances." "Very well," I said, "you want me to have a lover, never to see him, and never to pay any attention to him." "Not at all," she replied; "I wish you only to pay him attention in such a manner that the public may be undecided as to the judgment it ought to pass upon him." "Ah! you admit then that, in spite of all these

precautions, people will talk about it; and then, good-bye to my reputation." "What has put that idea into your head? In the first place, what woman is not talked about? Have you gained much up to the present by not having had a lover? Has it prevented the public from assigning the Chevalier de Canaples to you?" "What!" I cried, "the Chevalier de Canaples! people can believe that?" "Poor child," she replied, "everything astonishes and startles you! In this world people say all they fancy; they believe everything or nothing of what they hear said. Who takes sufficient interest in the matter to investigate such random reports? Besides, it is only a woman's fickleness in her tastes, or a bad choice, or, as I have already said, the publicity which she gives to it that can damage her reputation; the chief thing is her choice. It will be talked of for a week, perhaps not even at all; then no one will think any more about her, except to applaud her." "I cannot accustom myself to such a code of morals," I said. "There are three things which I cannot conceive possible: the first is, that a woman can have a lover and look at him without blushing, for such a connection brings with it a perpetual traffic in untruths; the second, that she can have a lover without its being known; the third, that she can endure the looks of those who know of it or suspect it." Mademoiselle d'Ette, after reflecting for a moment, said to me, "I know that you are frank and discreet: tell me plainly what opinion people have of me." "The

highest—one that you would not be able to keep if you were to practise the morality which you have just preached to me." "That is what I was waiting for you to say. After I lost my mother I was seduced by the Chevalier de Valory, who had, so to say, seen me brought up. My extreme youth and the confidence which I felt in him did not at first allow me to mistrust his designs. I was a long time before I perceived them, and when I did, I had taken such a fancy to him that I no longer had strength to resist him. I felt certain scruples: he removed them by promising to marry me. He really made efforts to do so, but, as I saw that his family was opposed to it, owing to the disparity of age and my small fortune, and as I felt happy as I was, I stifled my scruples first, the more so because he is not well off himself. He began to reflect. I proposed that we should continue to live as we were: he consented. I left my province and followed him to Paris. You see what my life is there. Four times a week he spends the day with me; the rest of the time we are content to hear from each other, except when chance brings us together. We live quite happily and contentedly; perhaps that would not be the case if we were married." "I am bewildered," I interrupted; "all that you say confuses me. I feel that I shall want time to get used to the idea." "Not so long as you fancy. I promise you that you will soon find my code of morals quite simple; you are just the woman to appre-

ciate it." "I am not in a position to make use of it," I replied. "Fortunately I am not in love; and, even if I were, I could never promise myself a moment's happiness by overcoming my scruples. Uneasiness, restraint, and shame are bound to embitter a feeling which is only delightful in so far as one abandons oneself to it entirely." After this conversation we went out to make a few purchases. We met M. de Francueil, who told me that he had called seven or eight times without being able to see me. One of these days, when I do not go out, I will let him know. He is an accomplished person; he understands music. His society was very agreeable to me during my illness; it may be a further resource to me.

*January 5th, 1749.*

I feel sad and ill at ease to-day. I have not seen Mademoiselle d'Ette at all. I cannot do without her; I am waiting impatiently for to-morrow in the hope of seeing her. If my health continues to be as bad as it has been for the last week, I shall invite her to come and spend some time with me, since I cannot go and fetch her myself. My heart needs support; I am conscious of a void, of a feeling of languor. I must be much fonder of her than I believe, for I can think of no one but her.

*January 12th.*

Mademoiselle d'Ette has been with me for the last two days. She helps me to forget my

sufferings, which are nevertheless very great. The Chevalier de Valory spent the afternoon with us yesterday. Their union is pleasant to see. There is nothing improper about it; it is even interesting. If I had not been told by Mademoiselle d'Ette of the attachment between them, I should never have guessed it. The only fault I have to find with her is, that she is not sufficiently indulgent towards those whom she loves. She is too ready to laugh at them. It is a fault of her mind, with which it is easy to see that her heart has nothing to do; she represents them in such fashion that, however caustic her witticisms, it is impossible to convict her of spitefulness, and it is easy to see that she is always anxious to make up for the harm her jokes may have done by praising the subject of them immediately afterwards.

The Chevalier is very amiable; he has a way of talking and looking which is altogether refined and interesting. He is not ill-tempered, but he is hasty; it is this that gives him just the amount of liveliness needed to make his society equally agreeable and amusing, the more so because his hastiness is tempered by an inexhaustible fund of goodness. He is a regular monkey, and his imitations are very amusing; but one can see that he only devotes himself to this kind of pleasantry to please his friend. I have reason to think so, since I have never heard it said that he possessed this accomplishment, and I did not know of it until I made their acquaint-

ance. He is well informed of all that occurs in Paris—the intrigues and cabals of society. He goes out every morning, as I have been told, to pick up all the details which he comes to give Mademoiselle d'Ette in the evening. They amuse me, and I profit by them; no doubt because I have nothing to do, for, as a rule, I do not care to trouble myself about other people's affairs.

*From* MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE *to the* CHEVALIER DE VALORY.

I ask your pardon, my dear Chevalier, but I will not yet return the visit which your sister-in-law has done me the honour to pay me. I shall not leave Madame d'Épinay to-day; I shall not leave her even for several days. The woman is really too unhappy. What a soul! I know no one so generous, so interesting as she is; no one so unworthy as her husband. I believe that he has as many vices as his wife has virtues. My suspicions were only too well founded. I have attempted to arouse hers; but she felt so secure that she would not even hear me.

"You are unjust," she answered; "M. d'Épinay is ungrateful and fickle; he puts on a false manner, and is even harsh to me, but he is an honourable man." However, the proofs soon became so strong that she could no longer refuse to be convinced. Judge of the poor woman's despair. In spite of this, she has expressed a wish that her husband should be informed of

her condition with all the precautions necessary to avoid humiliating him. She is convinced that this unhappiness will produce so strong an impression upon him that it will have the effect of influencing his future conduct and of curing him of his excesses. "That is very honourable and very generous on your part," I said to her, "but it is perhaps the only chance you will have in your life of making yourself your husband's master; will you let it slip?" "Certainly not, that is not my intention; but, the greater and more irreparable his offence, the more confounded he will be, and the more generously I desire to behave towards him." "Well, but you must not say anything of the kind; you must let his parents and all the world know; you must inform the public how he behaves, and how greatly you are to be pitied; you must at least take advantage of your unhappiness to the utmost in order to gain a freedom, which women hardly ever obtain, and yet which is the most precious of all advantages. Think of it; you will regret it when it is too late. Two such favourable opportunities are not to be found in a lifetime." "My friend, I will do nothing of the kind."

While I was speaking to her she was almost motionless: her eyes were fixed upon the ground, and she seemed absorbed by grief. "What would M. de Lisieux say," she cried, "if he knew it?" "If he knew it! But he must know it, whether you like it or not. I am going to tell him, and I am sure that he will agree with me.

More than this, I tell you beforehand that your husband is not a man to be touched by such noble, such grand behaviour; the man must be humbled before you can make anything of him."

I assured her that it was necessary that M. de Lisieux, or M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles should be informed of it. "I am not even sure that I shall not tell them all myself," I added, "in spite of you." "Mind you do nothing of the kind," she replied eagerly; "if you do, I shall disown you, I shall quarrel with you, and I will never forgive you, alive or dead." "Make yourself easy; I will do nothing without your consent; but it is very hard to see you so vigorously opposing your own interests, while you have it in your power secure tranquillity for the rest of your life."

M. d'Épinay knew that it was I who had enlightened his wife upon her position; I do not think he loves me any the more for it. His first impulse was to say, "Why has she told her?" You may judge from this of the man's delicacy and honour. He came to her with an air of the falsest repentance and sorrow, which he did not feel at all. The more Madame d'Épinay's attitude tore my heart, the more her husband's disgusted me.

His only answer to what she said was protestations and a few tears which he managed to squeeze out. The poor little woman was taken in by them, or pretended to be. He threw himself at her feet, acknowledged himself a monster

and a wretch, and assured her that he was ready for the future to do exactly what she ordered him in everything. "The only favour," he added, "which a miserable wretch who is not worthy to live asks of you is, that you will say nothing to anyone whatever about the incident" (How do you like this expression?), "above all, not to our parents or to Madame de Maupeou." "Make yourself easy," she said; "I promise you the profoundest secrecy, and all the compensation I ask is, that you will renounce for ever all bad company, especially that of the Chevalier de Canaples, whom you have so many reasons for never seeing again, especially since I have shut my door against him." He swore, protested, and took all the oaths one pleased; but he perpetually harked back to his dread that his relations might hear something about it.

I have induced my patient to write to M. de Lisieux. With great difficulty she has dictated a few words to me. But I have made her understand that it is absolutely necessary that in this matter she should have a witness whose evidence would bear weight. She has commissioned me to inform him of her husband's repentance, and the promise of inviolable secrecy which she has given him. She has carried her delicacy so far as to tell her husband that M. de Lisieux was the only person from whom she had concealed nothing. He was inclined to be angry, but the fear that she still might speak soon made him alter his tone; he would be guilty of any

meanness to induce her to hold her tongue. Ah! the worthless wretch! You can come and see us just as usual; only, on your arrival, pretend to be astonished at finding me still here. Good-bye!

CONTINUATION OF THE DIARY.

*February 28th*, 1749.

To-day Madame la Comtesse d'Houdetot introduced M. Gauffecourt to me. I already knew him by reputation, and had seen him when I was a child. He is a man of great wit, very amiable and lively, although he is already getting on in years. I see that, for the future, by remaining at home a little, I shall be able to gather round me some agreeable society.

M. de Francueil has taken advantage of the invitation which I gave him: he came to spend the afternoon with me. He appears to be amiable—much more so than I at first believed. As I had no other visitors, after an hour's conversation, not knowing what else to say to him, I proposed that we should have some music, and we spent the evening in that manner. I wanted him to stay to supper, but he was engaged.

*March 6th.*

I cannot get used to the void in my soul, which seeks in vain for support. Those to whom my heart would like to become attached are entirely under the influence of ties which leave

little room for friendship, or else do not know how to enjoy its delights. Madame de Maupeou, when I speak to her about my feelings for her, replies, with a laugh, that my desires are bewildering me; that she is not foolish enough to believe me on my word, because one fine morning she might find that she was only the shadow of that which my heart is seeking. Mademoiselle d'Ette only gives me her company during the few moments that her passion for the Chevalier allows her. My children are only an occupation, a duty for me, and do not fill my heart at all. I read, I work, I dream much, but often I dream idly: no idea fixes my attention. I run lightly over a number of things, from which my imagination turns away as mechanically and indifferently as it has directed itself towards them. Perhaps M. Gauffecourt, if he continues to be all that he promises, will be a great resource to me in the future. His age and personal appearance protect him from censure; but time is necessary to learn whether a man deserves as much friendship as esteem. Up to the present M. de Francueil amuses me more: he is accomplished, and possesses an agreeable wit. He has persuaded me to take up music again, which I had for some time neglected: he has even given me several lessons in composition.

*Épinay, April 5th.*

We have come here to spend Easter. M. d'Épinay has invited M. de Francueil, at which

I am very pleased. He is polite without being formal, graceful in everything he does, obliging and delightfully agreeable; his face prejudices one in his favour, and his conversation is so interesting that it is impossible to help being greatly attracted by him. He has been very successful with M. de Bellegarde. With whom would he not be! He paints wonderfully, is a great musical composer; his attainments are varied, and his cheerfulness is precious to me. I declare that, for some time, I have not spent such agreeable moments. M. d'Épinay starts again to-morrow on a fresh circuit, which will last six months at least.

*April 15th.*

How happy are those who are in harmony with themselves! I cried to myself this morning when I awoke. I am unhappy. I know the means of alleviating my condition, and I have not the courage to make use of it. Come then, my dear friend, and set my ideas and wishes in order. Will not Heaven send me my friend? As I was finishing this sentence Mademoiselle d'Ette came in. "Come to me," I said, "I need you greatly." She sat down on my bed. I threw my arms round her neck and embraced her, bursting into tears. "What is the matter with you?" she said to me; "has M. d'Épinay given you some new cause for grief?" "Thanks to your advice," I replied, "my husband has no longer the right to give me any. But I am

afraid I have followed that advice too well; perhaps," I added, hiding my face in her bosom, "you already blame me for having taken literally the words which you uttered in order perhaps only to try me?" "Do you think that?" she said. "Don't you see that you are disapproving my conduct and accusing me of deceit? Unless you have made a choice unworthy of you, which you are not capable of doing, I can only approve." "It is not a question of choice," I answered; "I have allowed myself to be caught like a child. I do not yet myself know whether I love, still less whether I am loved. Some slight marks of preference, which perhaps only proceed from a mind accustomed to gallantry, some tokens of interest and compassion, the origin of which is probably only a feeling of humanity—this it is that has captivated me, and I tremble at the idea of allowing a fancy to gain strength, which will perhaps prove my misfortune, if I abandon myself to it." "But," said Mademoiselle d'Ette, "before I answer you, let us understand each other. Of whom are you speaking to me? If it is M. de Francueil, you need have no doubt about it; he is in love with you. I will even tell you that I perceived it long ago, and that, when I noticed it, I was all the more pleased, because he seems to be a sensible and judicious person. He enjoys a good reputation, and has large means; in short, he is just the man I desire for you. Now, if you are sincere, you ought to have no doubt of his affection. To

see you together, I thought that he had spoken of it to you, and, in fact, believed that you had listened to him." "No, really and truly, he has not said a word to me about it; all that you may have noticed has only been a demonstration of friendship on his part, and, on mine, of gratitude." "In that case," she rejoined, "it may become serious. Tell me in detail the progress of this acquaintance; for—I say it without reproach, my dear friend—you have for some time kept yourself out of my way, which made me believe that matters were more advanced with you." "Willingly," I said; "I will conceal nothing from you; but let me get up and dress, for, if we once begin talking, I shall not be able to get a moment to do so." I made her sit down at my writing-table, where she wrote some letters. When I had finished dressing, we went into my little back private room, where we shut ourselves in, and began our conversation as follows:

"I really pity this poor man," she said, "at the present moment. He will become madly in love with you, for you are a bewitching creature when you try to be, and you will make him unhappy." "Why unhappy?" "Well, because, as for you, you are incapable of any lasting feeling. A fly, a ball distracts you, and you do not even know yourself what you want." "Your reproaches astonish me; you know well that the dissipation to which I abandoned myself was not to my liking, and that if——" "Yes, yes, let us go on;

tell me how you stand with the poor wretch." "Well, then—— But let us return to what you were saying, for I am very anxious to dissuade you." "Let us hear all the same." "Well, you know that, about three months ago, as M. Francueil had called upon me several times without finding me, I informed him that I would remain at home. He came to see me several times. The subjects of our conversation were nearly always painting and music. We went to stay at Épinay, where we invited him. Little by little the tone of ceremony disappeared, and an air of freedom, confined, however, within the limits of strict politeness, took its place. You say that I am devoted to pleasure; his opinion was that I was not sufficiently given to it. Seeing me frequently sad and pensive, he advised me to learn composition, in order to occupy myself. At first, I gave him to understand that I should like it very much; then, reflecting that a master would cost money, and that I had not got any, I tried to find a polite excuse to evade this proposal, which I had at first accepted so eagerly. I told him that, before making up my mind to engage a master, I wanted to know whether I should succeed. He offered his services; I accepted them, and two days afterwards he gave me my first lesson. I succeeded very well. He declares that nothing can equal my acuteness. Each day he shows fresh enthusiasm in his lessons: you heard last week the trifle which I composed; you can judge of my abilities.

"The day before my husband's departure, he

came to spend the afternoon with us as usual. I told him—I do not know how I came to mention it—that I liked nothing so much as to hear the sound of bugles during an evening meal. He took no notice of my remark. At eight o'clock he went out; as he was leaving, he met M. d'Épinay, whom he asked to invite him to supper, in order, as he said, that he might take leave of him. As he had not seemed to me anxious to stop, I thought this singular. In fact, he returned at nine o'clock, and, while we were at table in M. de Bellegarde's apartment, we suddenly heard in the next room the sound of bugles, which gave us the most delightful music in the world all through the meal. The moment I heard them, I looked at M. de Francueil, who smiled, and said that no doubt I intended it as a compliment to M. d'Épinay before his departure. I declared that I had nothing to do with this mark of politeness, but I said nothing about the remark I had made before dinner, and I saw very well that M. de Francueil was very grateful to me for it. After supper, as it was a very fine evening, M. d'Épinay proposed that we should walk round the Place;[1] we agreed. M. de Francueil gave me his arm; he squeezed my hand several times, but always on occasions when I might misunderstand it, and as if to protect me from stumbling or some danger.

"When we reached home, my husband, who was in a very good temper, and was to start at six o'clock in the morning, proposed that we

[1] The Place Vendôme.

should have some music until then. The first impulse was to agree, but M. Francueil observed that my health might suffer. He took leave, asking permission to call on the following day to inquire how I found myself after the fatigues of the evening. The next day we supped together at Madame Darty's. I was rather unwell. The attention and anxiety which he showed on my behalf are beyond description. I left early; I expected that he would offer to escort me: he did nothing of the kind, and I confess that I was annoyed at it. But, when I reached home, I was considerably astonished to see his carriage following mine. He got out, and escorted me as far as my ante-room only. He inquired after my health with signs of the liveliest interest, and immediately withdrew without entering my room. All these tokens of regard on his part were not lost, and I felt them keenly.

"Yesterday he ventured to tell me that he suspected that I was distressed about something. I should have thought myself wanting in respect to him if I had attempted to conceal it. I will even confess to you that, for the first time in my life, I was not quite sincere, for I greatly exaggerated the sorrow which my husband's conduct caused me, being afraid that he would speak to me of love, which would have obliged me to send him away." "Why send him away? That is singularly inconsistent." "Quite true; for I only take pleasure in his society and yours." "Yes, in mine, particularly when you talk about

him: is not that the case?" "But—well, I will be frank; then, it pleases me more." "I knew it: what next?" "Well, then—what next? That is all. The interest which he has shown that he takes in my troubles is quite as marked as I had any right to expect from his behaviour towards me. What do you think of it all?" "I think that he is in love with you, and deeply, since he does not venture to declare himself. I still think that you love him too, and that you will be very foolish if you do not listen to him." "If only he would say nothing to me about it—we are so happy as we are!" "And why should you be less so, if you confess it?" "The reason is, that I believe it is impossible for a woman to be happy when she has had a lover." "And why so?" "For a thousand reasons. If I had a lover, I should wish him to be always with me. If, from prudence or any other reason, he were to let only one day pass without coming to see me, it would cause me the bitterest grief. If, on the other hand, his eagerness were as great as my own, the fear of its becoming known and talked about that he never left me would keep me in a state of continual alarm. Besides, M. d'Épinay will come back one day. If, from continued misfortune and reflection, he should take a fancy for me again? or if, from caprice, perhaps . . . . in all sincerity, could I refuse?" "What! a man who is killing you by inches, whose conduct is and always will be detestable all his life—that I will answer for—would you

have the heart?" "He is a man who has made my fortune, to whom I owe everything." "Yes, even——" "Hush, my dear friend! let us forget the past, and not argue about what will perhaps never happen. . . ." "Well, what would you do?" "I should be greatly distressed; but, without making any assumptions, it is easy to foresee that, if one day I had a lover, my husband would come to hear of it; then, either he would overwhelm me with his reproaches, which I cannot endure, or he would perhaps think that it gave him a right to continue his present course of life." "I can hardly advise you in regard to such inconsistency. Do you know what all this shows me with greater certainty—that you are making Francueil very unhappy? You will listen to him, because this passion is far more deeply rooted in your heart than you think. But, as these impulses are too strong to be able to last, I give you less than three months to return to your former doubts; and, the moment he begins to devote himself to you in all sincerity, you will be seized with a fancy to listen to what you call your reason, and you will give him up." "No, no, you are mistaken, you do not know me. Should I once love Francueil and give myself up to him, it will be for the rest of my life, unless he himself changes." "Are you sure of what you tell me?" "Yes, quite sure." "In that case, this is my advice. Try him for some time that you may judge whether his liking for you is genuine."

"That I will never do; for, if I decide to listen to him, it will certainly be at once; if, on the other hand, I decide to resist him, I shall promptly dismiss him." "That is exactly what you must not do. Even if you should make up your mind to listen to him, you must beware of letting him know it. You must try him, to see whether he is capable of constancy; for what man is there who will not be a woman's slave for a fortnight, to make her believe that he is in love with her? But he must really be so, if he persists, in spite of repeated refusals, and gives way to her caprices. You must begin, then, if he speaks to you of his love, by forbidding him to pronounce the word; you must assure him that you love him as a friend, but nothing more; tell him that, if he mentions it again, you will be obliged to forbid him your presence for a time, until he has recovered his senses." "But suppose he were to take me at my word and did not return?" "That would be a proof that he is not greatly attached to you; then, it would be no great loss." "I should not consider it was a proof of that at all; for, the more in love he was, the greater need for him to keep out of the way, in order to get over it, if he felt convinced that I did not mean to listen to him." "Exactly; that is just what men never are convinced of." "But you say that he has a good reputation. I suppose you have often heard him talked about in society; do people speak well of him?" "They do not speak ill of him; when his name is mentioned,

the pleasure his society affords is highly praised, and these praises are never followed by a 'but.' In other respects I know no details of his domestic life, but — he is married." "Is that certain?" "I believe so; I think I have been told so; I have even heard something about his wife which I do not remember." "And yet that is what you should have investigated, if possible. Leave it to me; my Chevalier will do me this service; he has three or four rascals at his disposal who know and are acquainted with everything that exists and with everything that is said in Paris." "Yes, but what excuse can they make? Suppose they came to know or suppose——?" "What! cannot anyone make inquiries about a man in Paris except to make him your lover?" Here we were interrupted by a message from M. de Francueil, asking whether I should be at home in the afternoon. I told him yes. I had a number of visitors one after the other. Mademoiselle d'Ette went away, once more assuring me that I need not be uneasy.

I dined with my parents. Immediately afterwards I went up to my apartments, thinking that I should not be there soon enough to receive Francueil. While waiting for him I began to write these lines. It is five o'clock: he has not yet arrived. Surely he has nothing to say to me. However, if he speaks to me, what am I to do? Alas! anything I can, except listen to him as a lover. Perhaps he does not know how delightful an intimate union is, when it is not disturbed by remorse. Ah! I understand!

*Eleven o'clock p.m.* (*April*, 1749).

What a triumph! what a satisfaction! What would become of me now, if I were not entirely occupied by the anxiety and compassion which Francueil has aroused in my heart? I can confess that I love him, that I am loved by him, that our union is pure. I can openly enjoy the delight of having an affectionate and virtuous friend. How precious has this evening been to me! I wish never to forget it. Every word that he said to me is engraved upon my heart. I can with perfect safety set down our conversation. I could show it to anyone.

On entering, he apologised for being so late. I considered he was right. In my heart I had already reproached him, but, remembering that it was only five o'clock, and that this was early for anyone else, I made no reply, and contented myself with smiling at his excuses, like a fool. I was a little disturbed, my heart beat: he was embarrassed and pensive; the conversation flagged every moment. I suggested to him a lesson in composition, which had been neglected for some time, since we had preferred to talk. I reproached him with this. "Really," he replied, "I feel that I am very ungrateful to music. It has procured me the greatest privilege that I can ever enjoy—that of amusing you, Madame, and seeing you every day. But, the more I see you, the more I feel that there are things far more interesting to tell you." I hastened to interrupt him, being afraid of a declaration, which these

words seemed to announce; and, not knowing how to avert it, I said to him, foolishly enough, "Ah! Monsieur, no doubt; it is of M. de Bellegarde's condition that you wish to speak. There is no doubt that his health is altering for the worse every day. I am greatly concerned at it. I could wish——" "It is not so much about the state of his health that I wish to speak to you as about the admiration which your tenderness and attention to him excite in all those who have the happiness of enjoying your society." "Monsieur, this admiration surprises me: I am only fulfilling my duty. I venture to say that I should be inclined to have a poor opinion of those who would praise me so highly for it." "It is just this manner of thinking which is not usual at your age. To separate yourself from society of your own accord: so much delicacy and gratitude, combined with so much attractiveness!" "I assure you, Monsieur, that I should lead from inclination the life which I lead from duty. The attentions paid by friendship and respect are so sweet! The old man is so good! I owe him so much!" "I admit it, Madame; but attentions paid to an old man, whatever be the feeling that dictates them, always produce some painful thoughts—at least, a friend is needed to share these attentions, and to compensate for the uneasiness and disadvantages which they involve; then they would be truly delightful." "No doubt," I said; "but who is the woman who would submit to this?" "The woman! im-

possible. Women are too dependent upon others to be able to make themselves responsible for the happiness of their fellow-creatures: in such a case it is a male, not a female, friend that is wanted." "Ah! a male friend. I have several," I replied. "Several, Madame, spoil all. You must have only one." "But consider, Monsieur, how perfect this 'one' would have to be to exclude all others."

Seeing that he was determined always to bring back the conversation to his point, I resolved to banter him, and draw a most exaggerated picture of what I required, and one at the same time quite at variance with any possible external advantages offered by his personal appearance.

"By continued zeal," he said, "one may hope to find indulgence for the perfections which might——" "No, no, Monsieur; as for myself, at least, I should not wish to allow a man the right to claim to be alone my friend, unless he were fully endowed with all the qualities which I should desire in him; and I should be very hard to please. Independently of his own personal qualities, I should require him to possess also those of all the friends whom I should be obliged to renounce for his sake. The task is tremendous. I do not understand how a man can have a sufficiently good opinion of himself to venture to undertake it." "Nor are the women to whom men devote themselves always fair in their claims, or even in harmony with themselves. I am convinced, Madame, that you would never demand

any perfection impossible of attainment. It is said that nothing is impossible for love; this proverb, hackneyed as it is, is none the less true; but might I ask you what are the qualities that you would require?" "Monsieur, it is not a question of myself." "On the contrary, it can only be a question of you, and no other woman." "Well, then, Monsieur, since you wish me to tell you, in such a case, what would be my fancies; in the first place, I should not wish this man—who would be the man *par excellence*—to be very tall; I should even like him to be short." "Why so, Madame? height is generally considered an advantage." "No doubt, Monsieur; but his height would continually remind me that he was there to protect me; this humiliates a little woman; you must admit it." He began to laugh, and I did the same. "Ah!" said he, with an air of great gentleness and timidity, taking my hand, "you did not speak seriously." Without answering him I withdrew my hand, and continued: "The advantage of a handsome face affects me little; it is a very small merit in my opinion, but very small!" "I expected that," replied M. de Francueil with an air which, to tell the truth, touched me; "he would have to be very vain," he continued, "quite destitute of every other merit, and to know you very little, Madame, to expect to please you with this advantage alone—if it is one," he added modestly. "As for his disposition," I said to him, "I should wish it to be so completely remodelled upon my own, that

this excellent man and myself should have only one will between us." "No doubt," he replied eagerly, "it ought to be and would be so." "I fancy," I continued, "that I should be unbearably jealous; everything would give offence to me." "That is good, ever so much better," he said; "it is proof of a great warmth of soul; what happiness to be that excellent man!" "I should not only be jealous myself, but I should wish him to be so; if he were not, I should feel offended." "And would you give him cause to be?" "Cause or no cause, would you think that, for choice, I should not prefer an ill-timed quarrel to a sign of indifference?" "Of indifference, no doubt, but a feeling of security proves esteem, not indifference." "I should also require sacrifices from him every moment; then I should wish, for instance, that there should be complete equality of fortune; this appears to me absolutely necessary." "I think, Madame, that you are right. What delicacy and feeling there is in your ideas. Ah!"

At this point he breathed a deep sigh, but did not venture to add a word. "Lastly," I said to him, "do you believe that I might perhaps be singular enough to wish him not to be more accomplished than myself?" "This condition depends upon yourself, Madame. You will acquire all the accomplishments you desire; you have only to wish." "Well, Monsieur, I should wish him to be so entirely taken up with me alone, as to be ready to give up every kind

of society and connection. That is what the excellent man would have to be!" "What, Madame, nothing about heart, wit, or bravery? But, as for the last, you would attach little value to it, since you do not desire to be protected." "That does not prevent it. I set great store by valour; and, if I do not wish to be protected, I wish at least to be in safety. However, I should never finish if I were to go into details. It is better to leave this masterpiece of nature where it is, the more so as I admit that it is not to be found." "No! If you please, Madame, let us finish; these last points are well worth the trouble of an explanation from you." "But I want a heart, a heart such as no one can find! a heart tender, refined, constant, and faithful." "That is a matter of course; nothing is so common, so easy to find." "Not so easy as you think; there are a thousand instances in which I should perhaps find it very far from the harmony which I desire. As for wit, for instance, perhaps you think that I should want to find it in abundance? Not so; it is a certain mode of expression, a way of looking at things, of taking a hint." "Madame, the heart bestows this turn of mind. In fact, you would have him model his character upon your own." "That is so." "But, in order to succeed in that, he must be allowed to study you, to attend upon you, to be always in your company——" "One moment; since you have wished it, I must finish. If a man such as I desire took

it into his head to love me—which cannot be, for he would perhaps find me as peculiar as I require him to be amiable—I should wish him to consider it for a long time, a very long time, before telling me, for I might perhaps only be disposed to listen to him when he was not near me." "Ah!" he cried with delight; "pardon my height, which I cannot change, and I solemnly promise at your feet that I will fulfil all the other conditions with unchangeable zeal. I am already the man who adores you above all others, and who swears to render you unlimited obedience."

He had thrown himself on his knees: I sternly bade him get up. I was alarmed at this behaviour and his eagerness; nevertheless, I felt touched and greatly moved. In the most confident tone I could assume, I said to him, "I am going to speak plainly to you, Monsieur. If it were my intention to listen to you, I would not keep you in suspense. I think I have already told you that I feel for you an attachment founded upon your merits and your attachment to myself. I will even go so far as to say that it amounts to the tenderest friendship; but—expect nothing more. It does not agree with my principles to consider myself justified, by my husband's conduct, in having a lover. Besides, I love him: every moment of my life shall be employed in the attempt to reclaim him; you may depend upon what I tell you, and you may also depend upon the tender friendship which I promise you."

"The truer your words appear to me," replied M. de Francueil, "the more I admire your candour and the goodness of your disposition, and the more unhappy it makes me. I would purchase with my blood the friendship which you promise me," he added, bursting into tears; "but I am not capable of enjoying it at present. I shall be obliged to spare you the sight of my despair, since you reject my love; it only remains for me to leave you for ever. In a short time my father is starting to spend some months on his estate; I dreaded having to accompany him: I ought now to be just as anxious to remain there with him for the rest of my life." This resolution on his part began to alarm me. I kept silence. However, I felt that it was necessary to break it. I did so by feebly saying to him, "It is for you to decide whether you think this decision is necessary. Reason, when one is willing to listen to it, often proves a great consolation." Then we again remained silent. At length he rose and took leave of me.

I thought at that moment that I was perhaps seeing him for the last time. I could not endure this idea: I eagerly stopped him. "Monsieur," I said, "stop; what idea of your feelings do you expect to give me by this behaviour? You show me, in fact, passion and delirium, not a solid and genuine attachment, nor one which can flatter me for a moment. Is it my dishonour that you require of me? do you ask that I should sacrifice my most sacred duties, and forget the oath which

I took at the altar—never to belong to anyone but the husband whom I voluntarily chose? If this is what you claim, I venture to hope that I should not regret the loss of a friend who could be so one-sided in his desires, who could show me that he had totally forgotten all principle, however strongly I might be inclined towards him. But—can I have been mistaken in according my esteem to M. de Francueil? can he be unworthy of it? If I have judged you aright, my friendship—I will even venture to say, my affection—ought in that case to be sufficient for you. I will no longer cause you unhappiness. I will be your consolation as you shall be mine. We will spend our days together. I will look upon you as a protecting being, placed at my side by Heaven itself, to recompense me for the trouble which my destiny is fated to make me suffer in this world, and I will be the faithful companion of your lot. We shall have pleasure not marred by fear or remorse, as long as such sweet relations shall last; we shall have no fear of the looks of the censorious, since we shall have no fear of our own; and we shall not have to dread the gloomy reflections which always follow the sacrifice of virtue."

He seemed to me to be touched, but he was not yet converted. He wanted to combat my principles, and to justify himself by a display of the same morality as Mademoiselle d'Ette had preached to me. I was afraid of his eloquence, and interrupted him. "Monsieur," I said, "you will not persuade me; you will only wound my

heart, by giving me an opinion of you which I should be sorry to have, but which will be unavoidable if you force me to it. I confess I have never considered the name of 'prejudices,' which is given to the holiest principles, to be anything but the sophisms of a seducer. I hope that my own are too deeply engraved in my heart to be ever shaken." He finally assured me, with an air of emotion, in a manner that was divine and enchanting, that he would do his utmost to submit to my demands; and we spent the afternoon in exchanging confidences upon our situation and our troubles.

I was proud of the victory which I had gained over M. de Francueil. He kept himself within the bounds of the deepest respect; he kissed my hands several times with a sigh, but without saying a word which could alarm me. Our agreement no longer leaves me anything to fear. I thought that, without compromising myself, I might arrange with him to meet every day, and exchange mutual confidences. I told him that I was starting for the country the day after to-morrow, and I gave him instructions how to manage with my parents to get himself invited. I do not know why I advised him to behave so as not to let Mademoiselle d'Ette discover his feelings. He asked me the reason of this advice. I made no difficulty about telling him that, until our manner of living was confirmed, it was necessary to avoid false judgments. "You see, then," he said, "that we shall gain nothing by it." "And

is not conscience," I rejoined, "conscience, which gives courage to brave false judgments, the first of blessings ?"

The time during which this conversation lasted passed like a flash of lightning. I did not venture to ask him to stay to supper; I was very much annoyed with myself after he had left. During the rest of the evening I was unable to attend to the conversation for a moment. I was dreamy and absent-minded in spite of myself. I went over in my own mind all that he had said to me, and the answers I had given. I wanted to see him again. I have, as it seems to me, something still better to say to him; in short, I waited impatiently for the end of the supper. I complained of a headache, and went upstairs again in order to meditate without interruption upon the one thing which can engross my heart's attention. I shall go to sleep with the delightful satisfaction of having brought back a man of honour to his principles. How superior I have shown myself to you, Mademoiselle d'Ette! This, I believe, is one of the reasons which will make me hold my tongue with her. Her intentions were good, and I do not desire to humiliate her.

*April 16th*, 1749.

M. de Francueil called upon M. de Bellegarde to-day. I had agreed with him that he was not to ask for me, and that I would not show myself during his visit. From my window, I saw him arrive; but when I found, at the end of half an

hour, that he obeyed me only too exactly, I was unjust enough to be annoyed with him. I knew quite well, I said to myself, that it was too difficult a task to be the excellent man. To think that his eagerness should fail so soon! Suppose, however, that he was alarmed at all the conditions which I demanded the other day? I will tell him that I was only joking. Then I tried to think of an excuse for going downstairs. I had just found one of which I was going to take advantage, when he entered my apartments. How glad I was to see him! How gently and affectionately he looked at me! I was delighted, and yet I showed some displeasure at his having come up. He apologised eagerly, and told me that he was ready to obey me if I ordered him to go away, because he did not wish to do anything that might displease me; but that, having had a long talk with M. de Bellegarde, he thought it important that I should be told about it. I interrupted him to ask if he had been invited to the country. He told me that he had. He had replied, without any affectation, that he would do his best to spend twenty-four hours there; this was declared to be too little. He was asked to give us his company for at least a week. He did not promise, since he was waiting for my orders to know what to do; but, he added, taking me by the hand, unless you drive me away, I shall be extremely sorry not to afford this satisfaction to M. de Bellegarde.

As we start to-morrow, we have agreed that

he shall rejoin us the day after, in the evening. At the end of an hour he wanted to go, fearing that it might be considered singular if he stayed longer, since he had spent the whole of yesterday afternoon with me. He was right. I even felt very grateful to him for his consideration, but my heart, like his own, murmured against this necessity. I had not courage to refuse to take a letter which he gave me as he went out, and which he had written in case he should be unable to see me alone. When he had gone, I returned to the window to look at him again; and, as if he had expected it, he came forward to the carriage-door to look up at it. How well our hearts understand each other! Certainly they were made to love each other! I ordered my door to be shut. I wanted to be alone with my letter for the rest of the day. The contents were as follow:

MADAME,—I no longer know the nature of my feelings towards you. The one thing certain is, that none can be more tender; but their very vehemence makes me afraid of being one day their victim. If you desire a perfect man, what will become of me? The more I reflect upon the conditions which you require, the more the sense of my inferiority makes me tremble. Will you at least give me credit for the zeal with which I intend to strive to imitate you? But, is it really true that you require of him that he should be jealous, that he should harass you, that he should scold you? Madame, my heart will never be able to suspect you. I am naturally trustful, and I confess that hitherto mankind has not given me cause to regret it. When I unite to this disposition the deepest esteem and the most violent passion, you may judge whether it will be possible for me to be uneasy about your feelings. When your mouth shall have condescended to confirm my happiness, if it declares, as often as I importune it, that you love me alone of all men, and as ardently as I adore

you, will it be in my power to doubt it? Ah, Madame! how much time have I lost! You forbade me to visit you to-day. I promised, because you desired it; but why pay so much heed to prejudices? It is cruel of you to ask me to deprive myself of a blessing to which alone I intend to limit my existence. I intend to pay my respects to your mother and M. de Bellegarde. If I have the happiness to be invited again to visit them at their country-house, I swear to you that I will not wait to be asked twice; but if they say nothing to me I shall go just the same, because it would be impossible for me to do without it. Meanwhile, shall I be permitted to write to you? Will you let me hear from you? I must write at least once every day. I cannot live without repeating to you over and over again that I adore you. I see and feel nothing but my love; everything else bores me and is hateful to me. Must I then leave this letter at your door and not see you at all? Never mind, I shall be under the same roof as yourself. It is only four o'clock. It is too soon yet. My eagerness might appear suspicious. Never has a day seemed to me so long.

I was certainly tempted to reply; but apparently the number of things I had to say has prevented me from giving them utterance. I could have remained twenty-four hours in this state. The servant came to inform me that supper was ready. All through the meal I thought of nothing but Francueil. My absent-mindedness was noticed. I either did not answer when I was spoken to, or answered at random. I pleaded in excuse the number of things I had to do or arrange before my departure. As soon as supper was over, I made use of the same excuse for going upstairs again to my room. There I read his letter again, and, now that I have copied it, I am going to burn it, as well as any others I receive from him, and as I wish him to do with mine.

## CHAPTER IV

(1749)

*Épinay, April 17th.*

M. DE FRANCUEIL sent to inquire after me before I left. I should have much liked to write him a line; but I contented myself with informing him that we counted upon his coming to see us soon. I have just taken a walk by myself in the most retired spot I could find, so as not to be interrupted in my thoughts of Francueil; but, being unable to resist the desire of writing to him, I came in again. Here is my letter.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

What more can you desire? Can I love you more, even though my feeling for you were that which you call love, instead of what I call friendship? No, I could not love you more; the thought of you accompanies me everywhere, your name is ever on my lips; the praises bestowed upon you cause me to blush, but nevertheless make me vain. Once again, my dear Francueil, if you love me with feelings as pure and lively as my own, you have nothing to desire. No, no, I am not jealous; you need not be uneasy; you cannot think less of jealousy than I do. Do not take

me at my word in everything I said to you—except my determined resolution never to have a lover. In everything else, my endeavour was to render your task difficult, so as to deprive you of the courage to undertake it and declare your feelings.

An expression has escaped you in your letter which pains me. If you wish me to love and esteem you, never again call "prejudices" those principles which ought to be, and which are for me, unalterable. It is done with; let us not mention it again; for it is my practice never to change my opinion in regard to things of which I am firmly persuaded in my own mind. It seems to me that only those persons who are uncertain in their principles put them forward on every occasion, or boast of never being false to them. That is the reason why I always distrust those who are for ever talking loudly about "wisdom and virtue."

Neither do I desire that it should be an unhappiness for you to fulfil the duties of your office, or to attend to your business affairs. I do not demand such great sacrifices, and I should not deserve your affection if I accepted any of such a nature, or if I complained of a necessity to which every honourable man is liable. Everyone has his duties and his affairs to attend to; I also have mine; it causes me no trouble to fulfil them. However, I cannot conceal from you that the separation with which we are threatened will be hard for me to bear; we shall certainly

be obliged to try and find something to make up for it; we shall have to write to each other. I do not yet see how we shall be able to manage to get our letters delivered safely; we will talk about that. But, above all, no lackeys; that is repugnant to me; besides, it is the least safe plan. Perhaps we shall be obliged to have recourse to Mademoiselle d'Ette; we shall see. Meanwhile, my dear Francueil, the all-important thing is, that you should keep in my parents' good graces. Talk politics to any extent with M. de Bellegarde; when he stays too long in his study, propose a ride to him, or some music, if the weather is unfavourable for going out. You must have noticed that, speaking generally, he is not fond of new music, or new-fashioned ways. Besides this, all that is good and honourable has claims upon him; it is enough to tell you that you will have no need to make any change in yourself in order to please him.

As for my mother, you must not let her see that your attentions are too marked; she does not like a fuss about trifles. Be satisfied with admiring in her what is really worthy of admiration and respect: her activity and unfailing watchfulness, her tenderness and goodness towards us. She has difficulty in walking; offer her your arm when you are close at hand, but do not let her suspect that you have placed yourself there for that purpose. Neither must you deprive me too often of the satisfaction of rendering her this service. On your part, it must be a simple

politeness; on mine, a mark of affection. I have many things to tell you and to ask you about your domestic affairs. You are married, Francueil, and you do not love your wife; how greatly she is to be pitied! But why do you not love her? What has she done to you? I want to discuss this matter with you. One of the two must be to blame. Can it be you who are in the wrong? I hope not; it must be she. However, I want to know. Adieu, Francueil; I could gladly spend the whole evening, the whole night in writing to you; but we must say good-bye. To-morrow—will to-morrow never come?

*Seven p.m., April 18th.*

I did not expect M. de Francueil until the evening. He came in the morning, and brought Mademoiselle d'Ette with him. I went to fetch my letter to give it to him; but, when I was near him, I did not dare to do so. I was less pleased to see Mademoiselle d'Ette than I should have been at any other time. I am afraid of her remarks, and even of her encouragement; in a word, her presence embarrasses me. I believe she has noticed it, for she behaves with an amount of reserve which, however, she is not sorry to let me see. Besides, my behaviour with Francueil does me sufficient honour for me not to fear confidences.

I seized the earliest opportunity of saying to Francueil, "Beware of Mademoiselle d'Ette." He had no time to answer me. We have been

so beset throughout the rest of the day, that we have not been able to find a moment to say a word to each other. I read in his eyes that he had lost patience. He need only look to read the same thing in mine. Just after he had left me to go for a walk with M. de Bellegarde, I met Mademoiselle d'Ette by herself. She came up to me with a malicious and yet compassionate air. "What have you done to Francueil?" she said. "He looks troubled and unhappy. I knew well that you would be his torment." "I do not know," I replied, "why you assume this. If he has a friendship for me, if he is fond of my society, if my tastes are similar to his, he ought to be satisfied; it gives me pleasure to see him. Besides, you know what my dreams are; I have persistently given him an intimation of them in a manner which is, in reality, very general and very indirect. If he has any other feelings for me than those which are agreeable to me, he feels that he must not declare them to me, and I intend to encourage him in his reserve as much as possible." "The deuce! you have made pretty good progress the last week," she rejoined; "but that is well; your conduct will give you time to become better acquainted with him, and we shall go on without a thought for the future." "No," I rejoined, laughing, "I am at the end." "And that is the way to go faster than you wish. Your inclination for Francueil may be very honourable, even when you give yourself up to it; but, in such a case, you must hold your heart in both hands if

you do not wish it to escape. Your looks already contradict your words; my dear friend, you are true; be so always. I not only tell you to test Francueil—for I know pretty well what to think of him—but convince your own self that you are capable of a firm attachment." "What," said I, "you know what to think about Francueil? Do you know him better than you did the other day?" "You forget that I commissioned the Chevalier to get information." "Yes, quite so; well! has he found out anything?" "His reputation is excellent, my dear friend; his character is most frank and honourable; but——" "What then? finish." "He is passionately fond of the fair sex." "Well, then?" "But what does that matter to you? You make no claim in that respect." "That is true; but one is very glad—— Although only my friend, I should not like——" "Well, make yourself easy; he used to have a little establishment away from home, humble, but respectable. Perhaps you could tell me why he has broken it up?" "What, really!" "Yes, he broke it up a week ago, without any fuss, paying something as compensation." "And his wife?" "His wife has retired into the country; she lost her reason after she had had a child."

When I was alone, I said to myself: He had an establishment which he has broken up! Perhaps he has hopes! they will certainly be disappointed. Yes, yes, I will abide by my determination; I shall know how to prove that a woman may have the liveliest and tenderest

feelings for a man, and at the same time be able to resist him and remain faithful to her duty. However, his walk appeared to me to be a long one. He returned, and I was astonished to see, on looking at my watch, that it had only lasted half an hour. When he came in again, I was engaged in copying a drawing which he had lent me. He came and sat down by my side. "It is a great privilege," he said, "to live in the same house as yourself. But—never to be able to speak to you or see you except when you are surrounded by ten or a dozen people, can you imagine, Madame, what torture this is for a man who adores you?" "No adoration, Monsieur, if you wish me to listen to you; remember the limits that I have prescribed for you, and do not overstep them." He sighed. "Ah!" he said, "you do not love me as I love you." "Let us not waste time in arguing about the difference in our feelings; let me tell you that I am happy to see you near me; that the country which I love will seem still more delightful to me now that I have seen you and have lived in it with you." I continued my drawing. "You have not been kind enough to write me a single word." I looked at him with a smile, without answering. "Tell me now!" he went on, "can you have written to me? No, surely; and you believe you love me! Ah! if you knew the good two words in your hand-writing would have done me!"

I could no longer endure it; I gave him my letter. He blushed, grew pale, and clasped my

hand as he took it. I gave it to him quietly. M. de Bellegarde came immediately afterwards to have some music with M. de Jully, and Mademoiselle d'Ette sang. My father-in-law summoned Francueil to get him to play the violin; and, seeing that I could not hope to speak to him again during the evening, I retired, to devote my thoughts more completely to him. Since I have been writing, I have already thought twice that I heard him in the garden. I will look. It is he; he is walking with Mademoiselle d'Ette. So late! that is curious! I should very much like to go and look for them. I will say that, being unable to sleep, I wanted to get some fresh air.

*The 19th: Evening.*

Just as I was going downstairs, I heard them coming up again, and I promptly went back to my room. I did not sleep much. I got up very early. It seems to me that I had a thousand things to do; and, as soon as I was up, I was in a state of great uneasiness. I went for a walk, and mechanically, while passing M. Francueil's door, I made as much noise as I could. I took the walk where I had seen him with Mademoiselle d'Ette. It seemed to me as if it would tell me all that had been said there the evening before; at least, it gave me pleasure to walk over the places where I had seen him, where I still perceived traces of his footsteps. I hoped that he would soon follow me. In fact, he came, but not so soon as I had hoped. Never-

theless, when I saw him, it seemed to me that I forgot all the time that I had spent in waiting for him. We loudly expressed our happiness at being together again. He offered me his arm, and for some time we walked along in silence. When we reached the edge of a large meadow surrounded by trees and crossed by a brook, he proposed that we should sit down. I chose the spot nearest the brook, which was at the same time the most shaded, and leaned against a tree. He sat down near me, so that I was able to rest my arm upon his shoulder. He looked at me, while I, in order to gaze upon him at my ease and without blushing, fixed my eyes upon the brook. "How beautiful you are!" he cried. This exclamation troubled me inexpressibly, and this trouble frightened me. I drew back my hand which he wanted to kiss, and I adopted a tone of severity which awed him. To help to give a different turn to our conversation, I exhibited some curiosity as to the subject of his talk with Mademoiselle d'Ette the previous evening. "Could it have been anything but yourself?" he said. "Being unable to enjoy your society, what had I better to do than talk about you? Anyhow, you would have been pleased with the manner in which I spoke to her. She wanted to discover the state of my feelings. The only thing in the conversation which displeased me was, that I was obliged to pretend a coldness which I am far from feeling." Our conversation stopped there, because we saw Mademoiselle

d'Ette coming to look for us. I only said to Francueil that I desired to have the details of this conversation, which he promised to give me.

We then got up to go and meet Mademoiselle d'Ette. She wanted to tell me that I was expected at the château. A message had just arrived that my daughter was very ill. She added in a whisper, "As I suspected that you were not alone here, I made up my mind to come myself."

*Three days later, 2 o'clock in the morning.*

What is my present situation? What will become of me? I should like to flee, to hide myself—I cannot rest. Ah! Francueil, you have destroyed me; and you declared that you loved me! I do not know what I am doing: I am too upset to write. Let me try and take breath in these walks where, two days ago, I dreamed so delightfully of you. Never was Nature so calm; everything is asleep. Is my soul alone to be disturbed and restless?

*After coming in again.*

The silence frightens me. Formerly I loved the shades of night. The advantage of a quiet conscience, free from reproach, is that it is never subject to alarm. When the bird of night made itself heard, it used to fill my soul with pleasure; how comes it that to-day this pleasure is mingled with affright? Need I ask myself why? Have I

not pushed forgetfulness of myself to the utmost ? How can I endure myself at present? Francueil! Francueil! you have deceived me. I believed you to be generous. You have abused the authority which you knew you had over me. How could I have resisted you—you whom I still adore ? My remorse cannot drive you from my heart; I feel it; each thought, each reflection only fixes you there more firmly. Yes; you will ever be the object of all my affection. Oh! how much love you owe me for all the sacrifices I have made for you! Come, come, then, O you whom I adore; with you alone can I stifle my remorse.

*April 24th*, 1749.

What happiness would be comparable to mine, if it could be publicly declared ? I shall never become used to the necessity of concealing the sweetest emotions of my heart. It seems to me that my countenance accuses me. How shall I endure the presence of my husband when he returns, since even the looks of those who have least interest in me alarm me? It is only when I am alone, in the darkness of night, that I can confess to myself the delightful day I spent yesterday. Nearly always by the side of my friend; scarcely ever interrupted; in the same carriage, in the evening, out driving; Mademoiselle d'Ette kind or delicate enough not to take any notice of us. How I love her for this attention! May to-day be as happy! May my

soul's intoxication at last stifle my scruples, which are really useless, since they have been so tardy and fruitless.

*The following day.*

An annoyance already! He was to have remained here the rest of the week; but he received a letter yesterday summoning him on a matter of business, and he will not return until next week. I mean to spend the evening in writing to him; what should I do without that?

*Two days later (April 27th, 1749).*

Mademoiselle d'Ette came into my room this morning, just as I was going to write in my diary. Alas! it is certainly fit for no one's eyes but my own at present. Whom could I ever venture to allow to read it? She came to show me a letter from the Chevalier de Valory, and her reply. If I had been less preoccupied, I should have asked her permission to copy them, in order to comfort myself sometimes by reading them; they are so full of confidence, affection, and cheerfulness. "Well!" she said to me, after we had exchanged a few words, as if she had just thought of something, "it seems to me that the country air suits you." "Yes," I answered; "I am much better. But, why should you not invite the Chevalier to come and spend a few days with you? My relations have asked him, and I should be very pleased." "Oh, no," she rejoined; "leave him in his corner; you are too fashionable for him.

We are worthy people, who are accustomed to live on nutshells; all your wealth would spoil us." "You are joking," I said to her, with surprise. "We fashionable? we wealthy? But, of course, you are only talking like this to amuse yourself." "No, not particularly," she said; "I mean it; and then, you want nothing at present. You have Francueil, a friend who is well adapted to take the place of all." "That is true," I said to her, "but I hope that he will never make me forget my old friends, whatever resource I may find in him." "That is very honourable of you," replied Mademoiselle d'Ette; "but my Emilie will not always talk like this. Intoxication is not at its height: it will reach it, and then——" "This 'then' will never come, I assure you." "Oh, yes, it will. Things have taken a turn which pleases me; but first——" "First! what do you mean to say?" "I mean to say—I mean to say. Excuse me. I see that you are busy writing. I will retire." With these words she left the room. For a whole hour, during which I have been alone, I have been dreaming, without being able to set down any of the ideas which this singular conversation has aroused in me. Ah! my dear Francueil, to-morrow I shall arrive in Paris. I will seek refuge in your arms, and forget the outside world entirely.

*From* M. DE FRANCUEIL *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

If you can imagine the excess of my love, my dear Emilie, you will easily imagine my despair

at being unable to come and spend the evening with you. I am ill. I must be very ill to be obliged to forego the happiness of seeing you. Yes, I am ill; but it is nothing. Do not be astonished. I have a bad sore throat, which obliges me to keep my bed; to-morrow I hope to come and see you. Adieu, my adorable friend, my Emilie. Pity me for being far away from you, in spite—— Be mine always. Yes; love, love as long as you can him who will worship you until the last moment of his life.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

What! you are ill, my dear Francueil, and I am unable to see you, to watch over you, to tend you! What will become of me? How uneasy your letter has made me! I found it on my arrival. I do not venture to send you what I have written. This sore throat overwhelms me with despair; perhaps, while I am writing these words, it is getting worse. Have you seen a physician? who is he? Remember that there are certain ailments which must be promptly attended to. If, however—— But that is not possible. Whatever happens, I will send you the copy of my diary. What torture! Your letter is curious. I am to pity you, in spite—but, in spite of what? I do not know what you have done, what you are doing; it is enough to live at a distance from you without having to fear for your health as well. What would become

of me if—— Ah! my dear Francueil, get well quickly; I cannot live if I know that you are ill. If you are not fit to go out to-morrow, I do not know what I shall do; perhaps I shall venture to come and see you. Adieu! I will send this evening to inquire after you; I will send again to-morrow morning. What will become of me from now until the time when I shall be able to see you?

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

*April 26th.*

Good heavens! what has happened? I have sent three times to inquire after you. The messenger has been unable to speak to you. He was told that you were better, but that you will not go out to-day. You have not written to me. You are better, Francueil, and you have not written to me! What does all this mean? I have not ventured to write to you either, but I can no longer endure it. Francueil! in the name of all that may be dear to you, relieve me of my anxiety, restore me to life. Have you received my letter? If you have, what am I to think of this silence? Surely they must be deceiving me, and concealing your condition from me. Tell me what is the matter with you, and how you are. I shall no longer believe in your love if you deceive me. Adieu, you whom I adore! Answer me without delay; do not lose a minute.

M. DE FRANCUEIL *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

As you desire it, my dear Emilie, I must tell you the truth, to prove to you at least that I am not capable of deceiving you. But, O heavens! how I dread the impression that the news I have to tell you will make upon you. Before all, believe that I love you more every day, and that I could wish to live and die in your arms. I am better; in a few days I shall be quite well. I am weak, and cannot tell you more. I hope immediately to avow my tenderest love for you on my knees at your feet.

*From* MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE *to the* CHEVALIER DE VALORY.

Well, this is still more curious, my dear Chevalier! Listen to this. You remember what I told you the other day about Francueil's love for Emilie. Well! you will see that the dear little thing has stifled all her scruples, and what has been the result. Yesterday, when I left you, I met her footman; I asked him what his mistress was doing, and whether she was at home. He answered that she was, that she had had an attack of faintness, that she did not intend to return to the country for some days, and that she had sent for her son, who had just arrived. He added that she had given orders that she was not at home to anyone. This made me

curious, and I determined to get into her room, whether she liked it or not. As a matter of fact, I was told that she had gone out. With some difficulty, I succeeded in making the porter believe that she had sent for me, and that her orders did not apply to me. When I found myself at the door of her room, I was hardly any better off; she had shut herself in. I heard her son crying; she and the governess were talking at the same time. I did not understand it at all. Being unable to make myself heard, I went round by the child's room, and, as it communicates with Emilie's, I entered without being announced. Her hair was dishevelled, her dress tucked up into her pockets, and she was sitting upon the window, her feet resting upon a stool. Her eyes were haggard and fixed upon her son. I gathered, from what I heard, that she was scolding the governess for having attempted to correct him injudiciously. But I could not conceive how such a trifle could have driven her out of her senses, as I saw she was. As soon as she saw me, she uttered a cry and jumped down. She came towards me with a wild look, took my hand, and conducting me into her room, said, in a voice broken by emotion, "What have you come here for? It is you, however, who are to blame. It is all your advice, your fatal advice." Then, turning towards the governess, "Take my son away; don't let me hear him cry any more; it kills me. Leave me alone. You go too," she continued, addressing herself to me, and pushing

me away while she entered her room. "How did you manage to get in here?" She flung herself upon the sofa near the window, and, sobbing, hid her face in her hands.

I was so astonished that I could not say a word to her. She raised her head; the tears began to fall from her eyes. She said to me in a firm voice, "I will tell you nothing; I cannot tell you anything; I am unhappy enough; do not torment me more; leave me, in heaven's name, leave me." She remained silent for a moment, and then went on: "It is not your fault; but why did you not speak to me sooner? it nearly cost me my life." "Your life!" I cried. "Yes," she answered; "and it is my son who has saved it."

The longer she spoke to me the less I understood what she was saying. I sat down by her side and implored her by everything I could think of most likely to move her, to explain the riddle to me. I had difficulty in persuading her; her words were incoherent, but vehement, mingled with reproaches and protestations of friendship. At last she yielded to my importunity. "I will speak," she said, "but how shall I have the courage to look you in the face afterwards? I shall horrify you as much as myself. No matter; perhaps I need a further shock to determine my lot." She got up and bolted the door, looked round as if she was afraid of being seen, then sat down again in the same place, and drew back as far as possible into the shadow of the

window-curtain; and, after having reflected for a moment, I saw that she was making a tremendous effort to speak.

It was really painful to me to see her. She told me that she had at length overcome her scruples; that she had yielded to Francueil's love; that she had intended to keep it a secret from me, and that I should in fact never have known it, if I had not broken in upon her solitude that day.

I saw nothing in all this to drive her to despair. She looked earnestly at me, then, lowering her eyes, said to me, "He is ill." "What is the matter with him?" I asked. She was silent. She breathed fast and wrung her hands. "You cannot imagine," she continued in a gloomy tone, "the horror of my situation." Then she shook my arm violently and repeated, "Yes, he is ill." Then, at last, I understood. I embraced and comforted her as best I could, and I succeeded in making her understand that she had nothing to reproach herself with. I asked her how she had learnt the truth about Francueil's illness. "In a letter," she replied. "I read it over twenty times, before I could believe it; but at last, when I could no longer doubt it, despair took possession of me so completely that—— Can I dare to tell you how utterly I lost my head?" "Tell me," I answered, clasping her in my arms, "tell your friend everything." "Well, then," she continued, "unable to endure my lot any longer, and considering that I was tied for life to a man whom I

despised, and who tormented me through what I held most dear, I resolved to free myself from a life which was a burden to me. I had shut myself in, and had already got up on the window where you found me sitting, firmly resolved to throw myself out of it, when my child ran crying from his room into mine. He came and threw himself at my feet. His presence touched me and reminded me of my obligations to him. You know the rest, since you have broken in upon my silence and my privacy. You will not leave me again; remember, I must escape from myself; but Francueil! Francueil! what will become of him? He must hate me."

I cannot describe to you the different feelings which occupied her mind for the rest of the evening, which I spent with her. This morning I wrote a few words to Francueil. He is not so ill as Emilie imagines; he will be able to come and see her to-morrow or the next day. She wanted to return to the country, but I have dissuaded her from this. This matter must be treated more seriously than that has been. However, her situation is more delicate than it was three months ago; for I should not be greatly surprised if M. d'Épinay were to carry his bad faith to the furthest possible extreme. For this reason, I have advised the little woman to tell all to her parents beforehand. She ought to have a clear understanding how to act. She has gained nothing by behaving with honour and delicacy; but as she hardly believes evil when it

is under her very nose, she is far from anticipating or supposing it possible. She wanted to write to her husband. The most curious thing is that she has not heard from him since he left. He has written to his father for money, and merely sent his compliments to his wife. Her despair is inconceivable; mingled with it is a sort of hatred against her husband, and also of remorse at having yielded to her lover, so that she does not know what she is saying or what she is doing. I shall sleep here to-night. I must certainly see it out to the end. Do not come for me to-morrow; I shall not be at home, and you must not be supposed to know what I am doing here. If I have time to-morrow morning, I will let you know how we are getting on.

*The following day.*

My dear Chevalier,—I ask your pardon a thousand times. I forgot to send you my letter, which I have just found in my work-bag. You will get it when you awake.

Madame d'Épinay's condition has been declared to be most serious; it has no longer been possible to keep anything a secret from her relatives. She has written to her husband more sharply and drily than is usual with her. I begin to think that, if her passion lasts, it will be possible to make something of her. She has also written to her father-in-law, commissioning him to inform her mother of the reason of her stay in Paris. Her letter is full of her trouble.

If she had to deal with sharper people, I would not let her send it. I have no doubt that they will all be here immediately.

M. de Francueil's illness is an unpleasant affair. I am dying for fear that suspicions may be aroused. However, we are to see him to-morrow morning. He has sent a message that he will come to dinner with us. I think it is highly important that this first interview should take place before the relations arrive. To prevent surprise, we will not send off the messenger to M. de Bellegarde until to-morrow morning. Good-bye, my dear Chevalier, and believe me, with affectionate regards, yours ever.

*From* MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE *to the* CHEVALIER DE VALORY.

What a sight I have just seen! Good heavens! what a head! what a soul! How interesting this little woman is! What noble sentiments! what honourable feeling! Francueil came to dinner; she withdrew when she heard his carriage. I had advised her to avoid the servants' looks at the first moment of the interview, and she followed my advice. When they retired, I took M. de Francueil into Madame d'Épinay's private room; she got up to meet him, and flung herself at his feet, hiding her face in her hands. "Unhappy woman that I am!" she cried. "Kill me, kill me, Monsieur; I no longer wish to live, since I no longer dare to look you in the face." Francueil,

clasping her tenderly in his arms, lifted her up; but she was all at once so struck by his paleness and the general change in his appearance that she remained motionless. As she gazed fixedly at him, grief and despair were depicted in her eyes; she turned them aside from him, and fell back again into her easy-chair, bursting into tears and pointing to M. de Francueil.

He, in his turn, threw himself at her feet. She did not say a word; but I have never in my life seen gestures or silence that meant so much. One could see that she was struggling against her delight at seeing him again and her despair at seeing him in the condition in which he was. This last feeling appeared the stronger. She was unable either to look at or approach him. She avoided him, she hid her face; one would have said that she was horrified with herself. Francueil, with kind and gentle words, in vain endeavoured to calm her. She answered briefly; but nearly all her words bore the stamp of the deepest sorrow, and, at the same time, of the noblest sentiments. I should like to tell you all that was said by both; but the conversation was too disconnected for me to be able to retain it in my mind.

We attempted to divert her attention from her grief, to which she refers everything. For instance, I said that, although I was no better than any other woman, and had become my own mistress at seventeen years of age, I had no reason, thank God, to blush for anything that

youthful indiscretion had led me to do. "I could have said as much until I was twenty-three," she replied; "but I was twenty-four a month ago. I have lived five weeks too long." Francueil reproached her for these words, which were capable of two interpretations. "You are mistaken, my friend," said Madame d'Épinay to him; "I have loved you for three months. But what could a woman who hated you have done worse?"

You may imagine that we did all we could to calm her; her grief is gloomy and profound. Now you know all about it. I have not time, my dear Chevalier, to enter at length into details; I am in a hurry to go back to Emilie, who has begged me not to leave her long alone. She says that her soul is utterly weary.

We are expecting M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles. They have sent a message that they are coming. Meanwhile, Emilie has been a little calmer. After dinner we agreed that we would cleverly mention, in the course of conversation, that we had seen M. de Francueil every day; we shall also say that he had a sore throat on his arrival at Épinay, which kept him in bed for a day, and that he is starting in the evening for another country-house. As a matter of fact, he will be absent, and will send a message from somewhere or other that he is suffering from tertian fever, so that, if he returns in a few days, the alteration in him, which is very marked, may not create surprise. You will be able to come

and see me to-morrow morning; I shall be able to tell you how I have been getting on.

*Eight p.m.*

While I was engaged in writing to you, the old relatives arrived. I declare they have only missed Francueil by ten minutes. I do not know what they would have thought if they had seen him. For a moment it seemed to me that all the energy of Madame d'Épinay's soul had abandoned her at the sight of her relations. When I entered the room, I found her in the arms of her mother, who had regained all the activity that her daughter had lost. She is terribly grieved and frightfully angry with her son-in-law. She wanted to write to him; I fancy her letter would have been in a fine style. M. de Bellegarde held his daughter-in-law's hand and, assisted by her mother, tried to console her, and swore that it was a lucky thing for his son that he had known nothing of his unworthy conduct from the very beginning of the affair. He says that he hopes that it will be a lesson to him for the rest of his life. Emilie, who has hitherto only sought to find excuses for her husband, combated, as strongly as she was able, this idea of M. de Bellegarde. "I flattered myself with the same idea," she said to him; "but what hope will be left to you when you hear things like this?" Then, without taking breath, she gave a full account of M. d'Épinay's conduct, offences, and principles. But what showed me her wrong-headedness, in

the midst of this delightful confession, was that she introduced throughout the history of her own thoughtless acts; in truth, she was very nearly mentioning Francueil.

I was ready to die with affright when I saw her on the way to tell everything. Besides, the indignation against d'Épinay was so strong that it was hardly possible to lay stress upon his wife's faults, which at any other time might have appeared very serious, of that I am certain. They pitied and made much of her; but, in spite of the fortunate prejudice in her favour, she never had courage to utter the name of Francueil, and I had to say all that we had agreed upon.

Madame de Roncherolles has somehow or other discovered that Madame d'Épinay is at Paris. She sent her a message this evening that she would come and see her to-morrow. We have not let Madame de Maupeou know anything. It is certain that visitors cannot be received while Emilie is in her present condition; and what answer can be given to friends who have the right to ask questions? Besides, her despair would betray her. You can come and see me for a moment to-morrow morning in my room. Good day, good night, my dear Chevalier, till to-morrow.

P.S.—By the way, I nearly omitted to mention the lecture which runs through your letter. No doubt, you did not mean it seriously. I wonder how it is that it is just those in whom we take an interest and whom we love that are

nearly always judged wrongly and are treated with greatest injustice. If I have made inquiries about the fortune and generosity of those who come to Emilie's house, I know nothing about it; but it is quite untrue to say that this always is my first thought. I do not know what has caused you to make this witty remark, but it is very insipid. If it had any foundation, it would only prove my desire to estimate the value of these wonderful reputations which are so talked about, which I always reduce by half, when he who is extolled is rich and generous. It is my own special touchstone. Do you understand, Chevalier?

It is easy to see that Madame d'Épinay, in revealing to her parents the conduct of her husband, was trying, perhaps even without knowing it herself, to find reasons to excuse a weakness which she had great difficulty in pardoning in herself. But, where Mademoiselle d'Ette thinks she sees the stamp of wrong-headedness, I see uprightness and justice; and nothing proves to me more strongly the honourable nature of Madame d'Épinay. As for the Chevalier de Valory, I know him intimately enough to do him the justice of saying that it would be wronging his character to judge him by the tone of levity adopted by Mademoiselle d'Ette in the most serious confidences. For various reasons I have thought it right to make public this young lady's letters to the Chevalier. Later I will state how they fell into my hands.

Madame d'Épinay remained at Paris for three weeks. Mademoiselle d'Ette took up her quarters near her. M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles returned to the country with the little d'Épinay, and came to see my ward from time to time. As she had informed me that she was ill, I visited her nearly every day. The persons whom I met most frequently at her house were Madame de Roncherolles, Madame de Maupeou, and M. de Gauffecourt. No one suspected the real cause of Madame d'Épinay's illness. At the end of eight or ten days, M. de Francueil also came again to see her.

I reproached my ward for having forgotten me; she defended herself awkwardly enough, although in a friendly and sympathetic tone. I was not long in perceiving her understanding with M. de Francueil, but I confess that I was not vexed at it, since I knew that he had the reputation of being a sensible man.

At the end of a month, they returned to Épinay. My ward, in the midst of her happiness, suffered at times from profound melancholy, from which M. de Francueil himself had trouble to rouse her. He had discovered the secret of making himself immensely agreeable to M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles. He tried to find means to afford Emilie some amusement. By exaggerating to M. de Bellegarde the need which she had of it, he urged him to have a little more company at his house. M. de Bellegarde agreed; and, as he

had formerly been very fond of the theatre, he had a pretty little stage erected in his château. Emilie, who was really happy and desired nothing, felt some repugnance to lending herself to such amusements; but her success so encouraged her that what she had at first done only to oblige became with her a ruling inclination, even a passion. The reproaches I had addressed to her upon her silence made her anxious to describe her amusements to me in detail, since she did not wish to tell me anything about the feelings of her inmost heart.

### Continuation of the Diary.

I had no idea that I had talent for acting in comedy; however, it is declared that I have; but I believe that my good old relatives, who have more or less lost sight of good models of this kind, and who have at bottom preserved a taste for the pleasures which they deny themselves, enjoy the bad imitations which they have at their command, for want of better. M. de Francueil, who possesses all the accomplishments which can be wished for in society, possesses, in the highest degree, that of being a good actor. It is he who has set our company going; he is our manager. Madame de Maupeou, Madame d'Houdetot, M. de Jully, and myself—there is our whole company at present; but we are expecting a recruit.

We have commenced with the "Engagement Téméraire," a new comedy by M. Rousseau, a

friend of M. Francueil, who introduced him to us. The author took a part himself. Although it is only a society comedy, it has been very successful. I doubt, however, whether it would succeed on the stage; but it is the work of a highly intellectual, perhaps a singular, man. I do not feel quite sure whether it is what I have seen of the author or of the piece that gives me this opinion. He is very complimentary without being polite, or at least without seeming to be so. He appears to be ignorant of the usages of society; but it is easy to see that he is exceedingly intellectual. He has a dark complexion; his features are lighted up by eyes full of fire. When he has spoken and one looks at him, he seems nice-looking; but, when one recalls him to mind, it is always as an ugly man. It is said that he is in ill-health, but that he carefully conceals his sufferings from some motive of vanity; it is apparently this which, from time to time, makes him seem shy. M. de Bellegarde, with whom he had a long conversation this morning, is delighted with him, and has invited him to come and see us frequently. I am very glad of it; I hope to profit considerably by his conversation. But, to return to our entertainments, really they have been very pleasant. We had a large audience of peasants and servants. The President de Maupeou does not wish his wife to be one of our company any longer. The fact is that she played rather too lively a part, which she appro-

priated when the piece was read, and she gave a very, perhaps too free rendering of it.

*From* MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE *to the* CHEVALIER DE VALORY.

Dear me! this is quite a new style. No doubt, my dear Chevalier, I am enjoying myself very much here; I do not conceal it from you. But you must know that, if it had depended on myself to rejoin you, I should not have failed to do so. It is very unfair on your part to pick a quarrel with me, when in reality I should have far more right to complain of you. What are you doing in Paris, I ask you, when you have no good reason for remaining there, and when you are tormented to come here? M. de Bellegarde regretted your absence again yesterday, in the midst of the festivities provided for him by his children. You did very wrong in every way in not coming. But we poor wretches must always submit to the wishes of our sultans; they will never consent to what is agreeable to us, except when they absolutely do not know what to do. To punish you, I will keep you as long as I can without telling you the reasons which have induced me to yield to their evident desire to keep me here; or, perhaps, I shall not tell you at all; for, in fact, am I under any obligation to give you the reasons for what I do? Is not our partnership really a free one? I am plagued by your reproaches; I am even annoyed

at them; whereas, if I chose to consider them well . . . . However, I prefer, in order to put an end to your ill-humour and mine, to tell you all that takes place here. You would have been more pleased with the comedy than you can imagine. Emilie and Madame de Maupeou have decided talent. Emilie has a tone of voice and a natural ease, eyes, and a smile, which upset the soul in spite of oneself. The President's little wife is outrageous and sprightly enough to make one die with laughing. The men are not so good, but they do not spoil anything.

We have really had a new piece. Francueil presented the poor devil of an author to us, who is as poor as Job, but has brains and vanity enough for four. His poverty compelled him for some time to give his services to Francueil's mother-in-law, in the capacity of secretary. It is said that his whole history is as odd as his person, and that is saying a good deal. I hope we shall hear it one day. Little Maupeou and myself declared that, between us, we would find it out. "In spite of his face," she said (for there is no doubt that he is ugly, although Emilie considers him good-looking), "his eyes declare that love plays an important part in his romance." "No," I said to her; "his nose tells me that it is vanity." "Well, then, both." We had got so far, when Francueil came and informed us that he was a man of great talent. That may be true; however . . . . There is no doubt that his piece, without being good, is not the work of an

ordinary man; it contains powerful situations, represented with great warmth. All the lively part is in bad style; all the dialogue and conversation, even the banter, is excellent, although a little affected. Our company intends to play it again; it will rest with yourself to judge of it better, or at least to judge of it by yourself. M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles laughed till they cried; they have grown ten years younger.

Let me also tell you that the Comtesse d'Houdetot has become very amiable; her mind is formed. She is certainly somewhat giddy, but she is so unaffectedly honest that it is an additional charm in a woman so young. We might be inclined to consider her a coquette, but Emilie assures us that she is nothing of the kind, and really I believe it. Francueil is turning the heads of all these young women.

Emilie is not in the least jealous, because she clearly sees that he has eyes only for her, and that he is only amusing himself with the others. She is not even the only one who is in the position of noticing it. I am afraid that they will not remain happy for long, for they advertise their happiness too publicly. Madame de Maupeou has already made remarks about them; but she is not the most dangerous. I suspect that Madame d'Esclavelles is not entirely free from anxiety about her daughter and Francueil. She examines them closely, and the fear of arousing Emilie's attention in regard to what perhaps does

not exist prevents her from speaking, if I am not much mistaken. At times she adopts a more serious tone with Francueil, and it is then that she speaks more highly of him to M. de Bellegarde than ever; in short, I am afraid that a storm is brewing over our poor Emilie's head. I should be sorry for it, for perhaps a little of the mud would stick to me; not to mention that she is really a good little soul, to whom it would be a pity to cause grief. Do you know what she did two days ago? M. de Bellegarde suggested to her that she should invest 20,000 livres in a speculation of which he thought very highly, and which, after all expenses had been paid, ought to bring in thirteen or fourteen per cent. yearly. "You are the master," she said to him; "everything you do will be right. But might I suggest an arrangement? Place 10,000 francs to my credit, and let the other 10,000 be a loan to Mademoiselle d'Ette, of which I should only reserve the capital for myself, and all the profits could belong to her as long as the affair lasted." M. de Bellegarde, touched by such generosity, agreed, and both of them, in spite of my refusal, my reluctance, and embarrassment, forced me to accept their kindness. The deed was signed between us immediately. Well, now I have told you all. And yet I meant to do nothing of the kind. Ah, cursed weakness! Am I right, at present, in keeping in with these people and humouring them?

Francueil is going in a week. I do not know

what we shall do with Emilie when he has gone. Adieu, this time, my naughty little Chevalier. Let me know by the messenger who brings my letter whether we may reckon upon seeing you this week. Adieu! I embrace and scold you heartily.

CONTINUATION OF THE DIARY.

Francueil leaves to-morrow. I have no longer strength to write. I am utterly wretched. He has just been in my room for a moment, for we hardly dare leave the drawing-room, where the company are assembled, at the same time. He has brought me a sweetmeat-box, on which he has had painted an incident from the piece which we have acted, where he is on his knees before me. Although the figures are not likenesses, the attitudes are so true, the two characters seem so impassioned—oh! it can be meant for no one but *us!*

But why should he not give me his likeness?

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

Perhaps you think you are away from me? Ah, my dear friend, you are mistaken; you have never left me. I have seen you everywhere; I have felt you near me. Your hand presses mine; my heart beats. Why cannot this illusion last till your return? What are you doing at this moment? Where are you? You are thinking of me, are you not? I saw that your heart was broken, when you left me; you were scarcely

able to restrain your tears. Did you read my sorrow in my eyes? Can I think of the time your absence will last? What do you wish should become of me? It seems to me as if everybody was scrutinising me. I am above all afraid of my mother. How can I conceal my grief from her eyes? Every instant my tears choke me, and I am obliged to restrain myself, even to endure all the insipid jests with which I am overwhelmed on the subject of your departure. I seek compensation in you. Yesterday, all the time I was walking, I kept your present in my hands, your precious present, so dear to my heart! In truth, there is something or other in this box which speaks to the soul. How happy should I be if I had your real likeness! Oh, I shall have it!

I have scarcely been able to talk to Mademoiselle d'Ette to-day; she is, however, the only person to whom I can permit myself to speak of you. M. Rousseau has promised to come and see us to-morrow. You cannot imagine what pleasure I find in his society. He is fond of you; he possesses your esteem and friendship; his presence will help me to endure my weariness; he appears to find me agreeable; I certainly intend to make him repeat frequently all that he has said to me about you. Ah! dear Francueil, let me hear from you. I should like—you will think me mad—I should like to have a plan of your room, of the house you live in, of all the places where you

may be without me. You see, from this wish, that I do not want to be a single moment without thinking of you.

*From* M. DE FRANCUEIL *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

A cruel destiny tears me from the arms in which dwells my life. Ah! what have I to do with it, this life, since I may not spend it by your side? My divine, my loving friend, where are you? A space, which seems to me immense, keeps us apart. How rapidly has it grown in extent! how quickly it has separated me from you! How sad are all my surroundings! The universe is nothing but a desert for me. I can neither speak, nor utter a word, except to pronounce the name of Emilie, and ask for her from all that I can see. Alas! I have no hope: it will not give me back her whom I adore. My heart is ready to break, whenever I think of our separation. Reason is very weak when passion attacks it. My father has been talking of you throughout the journey; I have never loved him so much. He knows your husband's real character well, my dear friend; people do you justice—even my mother-in-law, who has never before spoken well of a woman younger than herself, and who agrees that you deserved a different lot. The curious thing about it is, that she praises in you just those virtues which she lacks. She is surprised that, with your wit and accomplishments, you are indulgent both

towards those who are not to be compared to you, and those who might perhaps be your rivals. I shall still be two days without hearing from you. What torture! To-morrow morning, at six o'clock, we shall set out again on our journey. I shall get up at five, to add a word before I send off your letter. Adieu! pity your friend, my own Emilie.

*The following day.*

The day dawns for me in vain: of what use is its brightness to me, since I am not allowed time to write to my Emilie? Ah! I have nothing to see, since I shall not see her whom alone my soul adores, her whom it seeks, her whom it calls, her who arouses in me such tender and lively emotions. The cruel beings who cause me so much sorrow cannot imagine my condition. They have never lost anything so precious, so indispensable to my existence as she is, of whom they have deprived me. When far from you, my adorable friend, nothing exists for me. All that this universe contains cannot afford the least relief to the sorrow our separation causes me.

Adieu! I am starting. My first care will be to answer your letters, for I hope to find some on my arrival. Adieu, adieu, a thousand times! Come, come to my arms! Come and see me breathe out affection upon those lips where my intoxicated soul sends forth the breath which animates it. You, whom the purest, liveliest, and most tender love has made the arbiter of

my destiny, pardon the complaints of a friend for whom the whole world consists solely of yourself. If I am left free to enjoy the happiness of adoring my Emilie, I renounce everything else. Her affection is the sovereign blessing, the only one to which I aspire.

CONTINUATION OF THE DIARY.

We had a delightful walk to-day; only the presence of my dear friend was wanting to fill my soul with the most delightful contentment. More than anything else, a conversation which I had with M. Rousseau during this week delighted me. My heart still feels moved by the simple and, at the same time, original manner in which he relates his misfortunes. He has been back in Paris for three years. The necessity of submitting to an injustice and the prospect of being hanged there have, he says, brought him back.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

My friend, we are lost! I am utterly miserable; what is to become of me? Some accursed and infernal creature has told all to M. d'Épinay; he knows everything. I have just received a letter from him. It is frightful; but it can only be Mademoiselle d'Ette who knows. . . . And yet, do not suspect her; it is surely not she. I should never forgive myself if I thought so, and I am going to take my letter to her immediately in perfect confidence. Perhaps she has committed

some indiscretion; no, that cannot be either, she loves me too well for that. I would rather see in this disgraceful action the hand of the most foolish and most offensive of my relatives.[1] But how could she have known?

M. d'Épinay banters me upon the resources of my solitude; he reproaches me for my silence. He reproach me! It suits him well. He says he knows the reason of it. He is sorry to see that his return will cause my unhappiness and his own. He advises me to handle my dupes carefully; they will not always continue such. He further says that, if I do not take care, my "secret vigils" will upset my health, and that he hopes that in that case I shall no longer lay the blame on him. "Secret vigils?" who can have said that, now? It is true that Mademoiselle d'Ette does not always attach the same importance as myself. . . . These doubts fatigue and worry me; I will go and find her and have an explanation. O heavens! if I should not be satisfied with her answers! But I shall be; I am certain of it.

*The evening.*

My friend, my love is hardly able to support me; Mademoiselle d'Ette has nearly ruined me. What a woman! What will become of me? It will be necessary—— I have not the courage to continue: she will tell you all. I do not know

[1] It is supposed that Madame d'Épinay refers to her sister-in-law, Madame Pineau de Lucé, M. de Bellegarde's eldest daughter.

what I am doing. How I dread to be alone with my mother! I do not know what will be the end of it all; but I know that I adore, and shall ever adore you. I wish to look forward to that alone in the future.

*Continuation of the same Letter by*

MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE.

Calm yourself, good friend! It was necessary to go double or quits, and I was almost certain of success. I was already in the drawing-room, when Madame d'Épinay, with a troubled air and a faint voice, came and begged me to go into her room for a moment. "Good heavens!" I said to her, "what has happened?" "A terrible thing," she answered. "I am lost. But, first of all, have you any indiscretion to reproach yourself with in regard to my affairs?" "I! for shame! But what is the matter?" "My husband knows all. There is a letter containing details; I have just received it." When I had read M. d'Épinay's letter to his wife, I had not a moment's doubt that the information he had received came from our worthy relative. "Well!" I said to Madame d'Épinay, "what do you intend to do?" "I do not know at all," she answered, "I am in despair. I cannot treat with contempt accusations which in reality I deserve, and which I am quite sure I still deserve. I am wrong; I am guilty, and I have not the effrontery to make others believe me innocent. Alas! I should find

it hard to justify myself. I am lost irretrievably. I believe it will all perhaps end in the convent, and that will be the most fortunate thing that can happen to me." It was useless for me to point out that there was no proof against her; that she only needed to put a good face upon it, to cry louder than her husband, not to answer him, or to answer him in a few curt words which would remind him that he had no right at all to insult her. I could not give her courage; her only answer was her tears. "I will be unhappy," she said, "but I will not be false." The dinner-bell rang, and we were obliged to go downstairs without having settled anything. She ate nothing. Everyone noticed the alteration in her face, except M. de Bellegarde, who saw nothing of it, because he never sees anything. In spite of that, I made up my mind immediately, and, when we left the dinner-table, I took papa into his room. I said to him, "Monsieur, it cannot be your intention that the most unhappy of women should still be treated in the most insulting manner; and yet M. d'Épinay, forgetting his past conduct, feeling no remorse for his behaviour since his departure, or any regard for the profound sorrow which the situation, in which he leaves her, causes his wife, can write her this letter. Come, Monsieur; read it, and consider whether, unless you wish to cause this poor woman to die of despair, you ought to allow a man so little worthy of a heart like hers —I ask your pardon—to treat her in this manner." He read the letter and appeared greatly annoyed,

but, as I was afraid of some private explanation in which Emilie's frank and honest heart would have been certain to betray her, I said, "Do you see this phrase? 'Handle your dupes carefully.' That is meant to refer to your kindness towards her. Monsieur, Madame d'Epinay does not know the step I have taken in speaking to you. The respect which she feels for you forbids her to utter even the slightest reproach. You quite understand that she would forget what is due to herself if she were to reply to this letter, or if she were even to undertake her own justification; that is a matter for you and your son. The interest which I take in Madame d'Épinay obliges me to tell you that it is your duty to undertake it. Madame d'Esclavelles is quite as much insulted as her daughter; they both suffer in silence. It is, I confess, a cruel reward for sacrificing her liberty to you." I saw that he was somewhat offended by my boldness; but two or three words of delicate flattery calmed my man and brought him over entirely to my side. "With anyone else but M. de Bellegarde," I said to him, "I should be afraid of displeasing by my frankness; but his good heart, his kindly and noble soul, will only see in it the zeal of a true friend, who shows him what no one here has the courage to put before his eyes." "You judge me correctly, Mademoiselle," he said, trembling all over; "return to the drawing-room, I beg you, and you shall see."

I returned and seated myself by the side of Emilie, who had not the least suspicion of what

I had just done. She was working, her head bent low over her work. "Be careful," I whispered to her; "M. de Bellegarde is coming in again; I have just read your husband's letter to him." "O heavens!" she cried; "what treason! what mischievousness! How shall I endure it?" M. de Bellegarde entered at this moment, and we had no time to say any more about it. Having seated himself near us, he said to Emilie, "I should have thought that the respect which M. d'Épinay owes to me, to say nothing of the regard and friendship which I feel for you, my daughter, would have been sufficient to shelter you from the horrible calumnies contained in the letter which he has written to you. I will answer it myself, and we shall afterwards see if he dares to persist in his insulting suspicions in regard to you. Perhaps also we shall discover the authors of them." Emilie flung herself at her father's feet. I took her hand, clasping it to give her courage; but she was so overcome by emotion that she could hardly utter the words, "Monsieur, I am deeply affected by your kindness; I will all my life endeavour to be worthy of it." "You have only, my daughter, to continue doing as you have hitherto done." "O my father!" she cried, hiding her face; then she looked at me with a sigh. I took her into the garden, and I declare that I could not help laughing at her astonishment and alarm, and at the simple Bellegarde's anger. "Ah!" she said to me, "what have you done?" "That is how one gets out of a scrape," said I,

"with a warm heart and a cool head." "You make me tremble," she said to me again. "Remember that, after such kindness on M. de Bellegarde's part, I must, if I am to be worthy of it, if I am to endure myself, I must give up. . . . I shall never have the courage. What have you done? Oh! what have you done?" "What you ought to have done yourself. You must give up nothing but your weakness and a misplaced fear, since you see very well that it only rests with yourself to do what you like with these people." "Let me confess my faults," she said to me, "and write to Francueil." I took her back to her room and returned to the drawing-room, just to see what had happened during my absence. I found no one there except the Chevalier. After a moment's conversation with him, I went to look for Emilie again. She had as yet only written four lines, and was thinking deeply. "I do not know what I am doing," she said. "Write for me; tell him everything, I have not strength to do so." I took up the pen. Now, if you help me only a little, my dear friend, I do not despair of inducing Emilie to adopt a decided attitude, such as it is right she should. Let me know if your journey will be as long as you feared at first. I should not be greatly surprised if M. d'Épinay were to shorten his. Goodbye, Monsieur, we are waiting impatiently to hear from you. You may continue to address your letters to me; they run no risk.

CONTINUATION OF EMILIE'S DIARY.

*January 2nd*, 1750.

My patience is exhausted, I can endure it no longer. I do not know what to do since my husband's return. He continues to lead a life of dissipation; he gives me nothing, not even what is absolutely necessary for my expenses, and the surprising thing is that, in spite of his irregularities, he seems jealous of me. He even goes so far as to watch me. He abuses me enough to drive me out of my mind whenever he hears that M. de Francueil has been here; and yet he is the first to go and ask him to come, when I am two days without seeing him. He gets into a rage with me with a boldness which confounds me. My soul is so full of fright that I am utterly unable to answer him, or else I answer awkwardly, and then I cry; that is my only resource. Can it be that there is not a corner of the earth where a poor unhappy creature, who is not allowed a quarter of an hour's peace, can take refuge? As soon as my door opens, if I hear the least noise, I expect a scene or some violent outburst. I feel convinced that I shall not be able to endure such trouble and suffering; nothing can divert me from the frightful melancholy which fills my soul. I am resolved to take advantage of M. d'Épinay's fresh irregularities to secure a more comfortable position, and to shelter myself for ever from the torments which it is beyond my power to endure.

Would you believe that he was arrested here yesterday with Mademoiselle Rose, who was disguised as a man, and was recognised by a police-officer? He preferred to let himself be driven with her to the commissary than to leave her. My father-in-law, when he heard of this new folly, wishing to avoid further scandal, went immediately to the police-station, where he found him. In spite of the humiliation of this adventure, M. d'Épinay seems more angry and annoyed than grieved. I have no doubt that, two days hence, it will be known by all Paris. In short, my dear guardian, I think that circumstances are the more favourable to a demand for separation on my part, as M. de Bellegarde has given up his son, and has forbidden anyone to say anything more to him about him or his adventures.

*From* M. DE LISIEUX *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

MY DEAR WARD,—I can only lament with you M. d'Épinay's excesses; but I do not think they can be sufficient to entitle you to a judicial separation. It does not matter that his bad conduct makes you unhappy; his behaviour towards you in public is free from blame. Even though you could take advantage of all the means which I know are at your command, what would you have to expect from such a course? You will establish before the public your husband's offences; you will reveal behaviour which is partly unknown and may partly be forgotten in course of time;

by such a course of action you will brand your children as those of a dishonoured father. Your husband is young; however great his offences may be, he may possibly open his eyes and reflect. Hearts sufficiently depraved to determine to live in disgrace at the age of thirty are rare. It becomes a gentle and kindly soul like yours to leave a door open to repentance. And, as for you, my dear ward, would you desire to gain an imaginary freedom by means of the shame and humiliation which inevitably attend legal proceedings of this nature? There is no doubt that it is only an imaginary freedom that you would gain on condition of passing your life in a convent. The most honourable conduct, or, at least, that which is most harmless in itself, is very reprehensible in a woman of your age, separated from her husband. A vague suspicion, a false accusation which he may have brought up against you in the course of your trial, will possibly prohibit you from all intercourse with the friends whom it would be useful or agreeable to you to preserve. It is my duty to speak frankly to you, since you ask my advice. I cannot approve of this plan, and the lively interest which I take in you, my dear Emilie, induces me to urge you seriously to abandon it, or at least partly; but I should not like you to undertake anything without having first consulted a skilful and discreet lawyer. My own belief is that you will have no difficulty in obtaining a separate maintenance; it behoves a prudent mother of a family to ensure the preservation

of what she may have; and this manner of acquiring a sort of independence has nothing revolting or equivocal about it. These, my dear ward, are the limits I think you ought to impose upon yourself, and the reflections which my tender and respectful attachment to you has dictated.

Madame d'Épinay followed my advice; and, shortly afterwards, I received a letter from her, in which she informed me that she had been successful beyond her hopes; that her husband agreed to their separation, and that her father-in-law himself felt that it was necessary. She added: "I shall at present have an income of 14,000 livres, including my property. The act will be drawn up by private deed, and M. de Bellegarde reserves to himself the right of formally drawing up one afterwards, to insure me an income of 15,000 livres, which I am to enjoy from his death until my own."

## CHAPTER V.

(1750.)

### Continuation of the Diary.

My renewed ill-health and business affairs have for a long time prevented me from attending to my diary. I must now resume it. I will begin, my dear guardian, by telling you that M. de Bellegarde has at last consented to M. de Jully's marriage, in spite of the antipathy he had at first shown to taking a daughter-in-law from the Chambon family. But his affection, or, if you prefer it, his weakness for his children is so great that he has been unable to refuse his consent to the happiness of one of them. Do not expect me to give you any details of this marriage. They are happy; that is all there is to be said. They enjoy a happiness which I hope may be lasting; I also was happy once, but have soon ceased to be so.

My husband has left me a little quieter since our arrangement, and at the present moment I am leading a life which is completely in harmony with my tastes. My happiness would be complete, if I did not enjoy such wretched health. Francueil comes every other day to spend the evening with me; he is much liked. I have kept away troublesome visitors. Madame

de Maupeou, my sisters-in-law, M. de Francueil, M. Rousseau, M. Gauffecourt, the Chevalier de Valory, and Mademoiselle d'Ette; these form my principal society.

I must tell you, my dear guardian, that I begin to entertain great hopes of my son. The child learns readily, has a good memory and shows judgment. He is gentle, even too tractable for his age. I intend to make a special study of the virtues and faults of which he shows signs, and to devote all my attention to the formation of his character. It is nearly a month ago since my father-in-law spoke of sending him to school. I ventured to disapprove of this plan, but in vain. Since then I have taken upon myself to give my son his lessons myself; I try above all to amuse him, and really, he profits by my instruction. I hope, if I continue successful, that they will leave him to me. The task is delightful. My days are divided between the care of my father, my mother, and my children; for I have had my daughter with me since she has had the small-pox. I give up my evenings to Francueil, either talking with him, or writing to him on the days which he on his part devotes to his father.

M. de Bellegarde was very angry yesterday with the Comte d'Houdetot, because, through carelessness, he missed the chance of acquiring a very fine estate. M. de Bellegarde had been very energetic to ensure the success of the affair. The Comte thought he could excuse himself, by

suggesting another, which was for sale in Normandy, the acquisition of which was as certain and the rights[1] as handsome; but as M. de Bellegarde had expressly excluded this province and this "right,"[2] and had even inserted a clause to this effect in the marriage-contract, he was not best pleased with the joke. I was assured that the Comte had himself broken off, without the knowledge of his father-in-law, the bargain which the latter had concluded for him, because he had made up his mind, in spite of all possible clauses and contracts, never to buy any estate except in Normandy. It is even declared that he is resolved to go to law with M. de Bellegarde rather than abandon his intention.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. LE MARQUIS DE LISIEUX.

I really believe that some spiteful genius pursues me, and is incessantly working to deprive me of the repose and consolation which I need. My son is to go to school, and do you know why? Because a number of circumstances combine to prevent me from successfully combating M. de Bellegarde's opinion of public education. He is in a bad temper, and with good reason; the Comte d'Houdetot openly declared that he would never have an estate except in Normandy. M. de Bellegarde nearly drove him out of his room. This scene had annoyed my father-in-law, as you

[1] The manorial or seigniorial rights.

[2] *Coutume:* the civil laws peculiar to Normandy.

can imagine, so I did not venture to put my arguments before him to-day. He told me that at the end of the week he intended to engage some rooms at school for my son. I have no time to lose, but how can I hope, in the course of one or two mornings, to destroy his lifelong prejudices—prejudices so generally admitted? I was beginning to devote myself seriously to my children. They are no longer for me a mere relaxation, they absorb my whole soul; while I endeavour to form their mind, they help to develop mine: a host of new ideas present themselves, and I may say that I am beginning to have a glimpse of true and real happiness, and that I entertain an opinion of my duties which was formerly quite unknown to me—alas! only to cause regret to myself.

I am so affected at the necessity of separating from my son that I only slightly feel the affront which M. de Maupeou has put upon me. He has forbidden his wife to visit me or to write to me; he says that he never wants to hear of me again. According to this vulgar wretch, I am a schemer of pernicious and diabolical character; in short, he desires his wife to have nothing more to do with me. In vain she complained of the harshness and outrageousness of this order; in vain she and Madame de Roucherolles openly took my part. Nothing could move him.

My cousin has found means to inform me of the revolting details of this tyranny. I told her how grieved I was. Her society was pleasant and agreeable to me. I love her tenderly, and

I have often had the consolation of soothing her grief; that is my most cruel privation under the circumstances. The person who came to me from her declares that the reason for this rupture is, that the President intends for the future to keep his wife at his country house, partly from stinginess, partly from jealousy, and that he is afraid of being recommended and advised to abandon the idea of such odious behaviour. I declare to you that I am greatly affected, but in my heart I am even more indignant than grieved; how am I to explain that? I love my cousin, I love her tenderly; her lot moves my pity; but, in spite of that, I am not so unhappy at what has taken place. Alas! I am no longer what I was. A few years ago I should have been in despair—despair at the idea of not seeing her again, despair at her banishment, above all, despair at being the cause of it. The heart becomes surfeited, its springs break, and at last, I believe, one no longer feels anything.

M. de Bellegarde knows all about the President's whim, and, although he has not taken much interest in it, it is possible that it will make him less inclined to listen to my representations. These cold and weak dispositions are often moved by impulses which they do not even feel. But, as time is precious, I will go down to his room to-morrow morning, and endeavour to make him appreciate my arguments, which I really believe to be unanswerable.

Since I have been a mother, I have rarely

lost sight of my children, and have made it my pleasure to look after them. Perhaps, from the moment of their birth, one ought to bestow as much attention upon the mind and its faculties as upon the body. But, if pleasure—far less, however, than the prejudices of ordinary custom —if want of experience and lack of authority have caused me to lose, in that respect, some precious moments, at least reflection and my present watchfulness are making up for them daily; and now they are going to deprive me of the opportunity by separating me from my son.

I should be inclined to compare the schools, in which children are shut up in herds to be formed and instructed, to those public establishments for the care of the sick, whom excessive want and misery have left without resource in the midst of society. Very good: let those who have neither parents nor friends, whom want deprives of all aid, go to these hospitals to find a remedy for the misfortunes with which they are overwhelmed; but what would be said of a man who, possessed of the means provided by a respectable competence against the miseries of this life, should abandon his house, tear himself away from the bosom of his family and the arms of his friends, in order to intrust himself to the paid and insufficient attentions of a stranger appointed for that purpose? These establishments exhibit the spectacle of human misery, and the extremities to which it may reduce its victims, far more than the picture of help and relief which

want ought to find in them. Let the poor orphans, let those children whom the misfortunes inseparable from the lot of humanity have left without position or resources other than the help afforded by the public—let them go to the schools to get their education; those are the persons for whom they ought to be intended.

The sick who are left in the hospitals have an advantage not enjoyed by the children left forgotten in schools; there, the physician makes himself acquainted with the patient's constitution, and treats him according to his observations, in order to protect him against the malady with which he is threatened. At school, on the other hand, they can only act in accordance with a certain number of general principles, sometimes true, often false, which are applied indiscriminately to all the children alike, without regard to their tastes or dispositions, which it is impossible to develop or become separately acquainted with. The attention given to childhood at school can therefore only be general, prompted, if you like, by honourable and upright motives, but which, however great, must always be inferior to that inspired in parents by the most affectionate attachment and interest, for it is unavoidable, in the long run, that strangers should become weary of those little attentions which constitute a mother's happiness; the greater their number, the happier she is.

The disadvantage which strikes me most in public education, and which carries with it the

most grievous consequences, is the impossibility of acquiring that intimate acquaintance with the character of each child, without which a teacher cannot hope for any successful results of his training. It is impossible to help him with whose wants we are unacquainted. Would there not be the risk of giving bread to one who is thirsty, of offering water to one who is hungry? Will it not inevitably be the result that, because one is thirsty, I shall offer drink to fifty who do not want it? Each child ought to have at his side a man on purpose, whose sole duty should be to study his character and the means best adapted to form it. What kind of men would such a study require! and, supposing they could be found, you would then make public education private, except for the difference there will always exist between attentions inspired by the feelings of nature, and those which are prompted by the duties of a profession, which many adopt without any taste for it. A further and equally serious disadvantage resulting from this uniformity of system, which is indispensable in a public school, is, that it is impossible to pay early attention to the profession for which the child is intended. One who is meant for the law is brought up like the soldier, the soldier like the ecclesiastic; and, in consequence of this arrangement, which is as singular as it is contrary to sound reason, not one of them is trained for his profession, and all find themselves obliged to fulfil its duties before they know them. I

myself know some fathers and mothers, who, while they have several children to provide for, would even think themselves wanting in discretion if they were to allow their views for their children's career to become known; they assert that the success of their plans frequently depends upon this air of mystery; it is a family secret. How imprudent, then, is it to confide it to people whose real character and way of thinking they do not know, and who, in general, are fond of domineering and scheming! This is how an irrational arrangement always involves more than one disadvantage; for this reserve is perhaps not misplaced. Why, then, hand over to those to whom we are afraid to confide a secret a trust a thousand times more valuable? Why rely upon them for the care of your children, the dearest thing belonging to you, and upon whose happiness will some day depend your repose, your consolation, and all the pleasures of your life?

I think it would not be difficult either, to prove that the spirit of rivalry, which is the only real advantage of public education, is the source of the most serious disadvantages, in that it nearly always shades off imperceptibly into vanity and excessive jealousy. I believe it might even be possible to supply the want of it in private education, and to greater advantage, for I have heard it said that in schools rivalry does not exist, except between three or four pupils; the rest, compelled by their inferiority to abandon all idea of taking first place, remain

forgotten, neglect themselves, and are neglected. It is this of which I shall endeavour to convince M. de Bellegarde. I declare to you that I should feel utterly wretched, if I had not still some slight hope left of being successful.

### Continuation of the Diary.

How dangerous prejudices are! To what an extent do they blind us! Ah! my guardian, I am miserable; but, above all, I am really angry. My son is going to school. M. de Bellegarde refused to listen to a single one of my arguments; not that he found them bad, but he would not even listen to them. His sons went to school, he went there himself, so did his father and grandfather, and, for aught I know, his great-grandfather, so then his grandson must go there as well. Our fathers never doubted that this system of education was good; we must respect the opinions of our fathers, they were better than we are. "But," I replied, "our fathers believed in sorcerers." "My daughter, my daughter, your son shall go to school, or I will have nothing more to do with him." What answer could I make to that, considering the husband that I have? The necessity for this is terrible and will be my torture. But tell me, then, why M. de Bellegarde, who cannot uphold any of his resolutions against his children—especially M. d'Épinay, whom he neither loves nor esteems—who lacks common sense, and who has never in his life given a good reason for

anything, why does he resist the strongest arguments and evidence when he has to do with me? This inconsistency and the necessity of submitting disgust me. I informed him that I was going to spend a few days at the country house of one of my lady friends, and that they need only take advantage of the interval to rob me of my son. As for my consent, they can only pretend that they have it, for I will never give it. Ah! truly a woman's position is very hard! Everything is united against me at this moment. M. de Bellegarde is embittered by the unjust behaviour of the Comte d'Houdetot, who summoned him yesterday for payment of his wife's dowry. The Comtesse came to see her father, who was excessively annoyed. She threw herself at his feet and begged him not to mix her up in her husband's disgrace; she burst into tears, and moved us all deeply. She and M. de Bellegarde spoke very affectionately to each other; but he is deeply hurt, and I am really afraid that the grief which this affair has caused him may shorten his days. I see nothing but atrocious conduct on the part of ingrates. The poor wife of President de Maupeou has set out for her estate. It is announced that they intend to stay there six months; but those who are well informed declare that his wife will not return for several years. I pity her with all my heart; she must be in despair. I should at least like her to know how deeply I feel for her position, but I shall not even hear her spoken of.

*Eight days later.*

Well, my child is no longer with me! They have taken my advice, and, during my absence, sent him to school. I expected it; nevertheless it made so strong an impression upon my feelings, when I did not find him on my return, that I have been unable to eat, drink, or sleep for two days. It seemed to me as if I had lost everything. They told me that he cried a great deal at leaving his mother, and that they could only quiet him by telling him he would find me at the school. I have already been to see him twice. It is a consolation which I shall deny myself in future, for I feel that my presence would distract his attention and injure his studies. He asked to say good-bye to his father; but, as it is nearly a fortnight since anything has been heard of him in the house, except the summonses which are continually being brought for him, he was unable to see him. I even believe that he does not know that his son is at school.

CONTINUATION OF THE DIARY.

We all start for the country to-morrow. I am taking my children there for some time, M. de Bellegarde having allowed me to get leave from school for my son: they will be my only resource. Mademoiselle d'Ette is unable to come and stay with us; her affairs and those of the Chevalier keep her in Paris. The Chevalier said to me yesterday, in her presence, "I assure you it is a

mere excuse, for I have no need of her at all." "He believes it," she said to me, when we were alone. "I am useful to him without seeming to interfere in his affairs; but if I were not there, he would not know what to do. Trust to me; as soon as I am no longer necessary to him, I will come and see you again." I can only respect the delicacy of her behaviour, and wish that all my friends were like her.

Three weeks hence, M. de Francueil will not be able to take up his quarters at Épinay. He has told me that he will devote to me all the time which his father does not claim. He appeared to me so affected at being obliged to let me go without him, that it has given me greater courage to yield to this cruel necessity.

M. and Madame de Jully are coming to spend the first week of our stay at Épinay with us. I doubt whether the life we propose to lead there will be agreeable to Madame de Jully. I do not yet know what opinion to pass upon her character. She seems quite taken up with herself, with her face, and everything that can set her off. She is tall, well-made, handsome rather than pretty; her conversation is generally disconnected; her manner is cold and absent, when she speaks; however, she listens with attention, and, sometimes, expressions escape her which seem to show more intelligence and firmness than one would imagine she possesses. She is very friendly towards me; it has sometimes crossed my mind that she was studying me. I

told her so once; she began to laugh. "To study a woman," she replied, "would be lost labour for a man, and, for us women, a useless occupation; we are all alike, and know one another's secrets." I tried to find a subtler meaning in these words than she, no doubt, attached to them. This week spent together in the country will perhaps throw greater light upon what I am to think of her. She is eight months in the family-way and seems rather annoyed about it.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE LISIEUX.

Oh, dear guardian, what a pretty little creature Pauline is! She is only three years old, but, for her age, she is remarkably intelligent. She and her brother are with me nearly every morning. I believe my son will prove very intelligent; he learns with great facility. I am teaching him his notes on the harpsichord, and, besides, I try to arouse his curiosity, so as to force him to put questions to me. I can only behave with them as I please in the morning, for, in the afternoons, my parents take possession of them. They tell them tedious stories, or, if my son plays by himself and makes a noise, they scold him and make him hold his tongue! The idea of preventing a child from making a noise! that is the way to make him weary of our company and only find pleasure in that of the servants. For myself, I allow them entire freedom. I think that must

help to strengthen their confidence. If I am tired of them, I try to attract them to some quieter occupation, and, if I cannot succeed, I pretend to be busy, or send them for a walk. In short, I am guided by circumstances, and I am so successful, that they are sorry to leave me, and never seem so happy as when they are with me.

Madame d'Houdetot has been to dinner with us twice. M. de Bellegarde persists in refusing to see her husband. I was very pleased by the attitude taken up by Madame de Jully in a conversation that took place between us three as to the Comte d'Houdetot's offences. The Comtesse complained of her father's coldness, and said that it was an insult to her to confound her with her husband. "M. de Bellegarde does not do so, Madame," said Madame de Jully; "but anger is so foreign to his disposition, that he is unable to feel it against any object, without all those around him feeling the effects of it. When he speaks of M. d'Houdetot or M. d'Épinay, he sulks with us for two hours; certainly I count for nothing in their offences. I advise you to leave it to time to efface this painful impression, before trying to bring your husband back into favour; and as for you, madame, the more you see your father, the more he will forget M. d'Houdetot's offences."

She also made several remarks upon characters in general, which pleased me greatly. I think that I shall end by esteeming her highly; but I

do not know if I shall ever feel any affection for her; our characters are not similar. She often sees Mademoiselle Quinault, who appears to be her very good friend; she continually speaks to me of her as a woman of rare merit and intelligence; she has even proposed to take me to her house. There, she assures me, one can really become acquainted with the world, because all the best society in Paris assembles there. I should be glad to have your opinion before making any promise. Madame de Jully returns to Paris to-morrow; she is on the eve of her confinement. I have promised to go and see her. I expect M. de Francueil this evening; he is coming to spend three days with us. Mademoiselle d'Ette will not come this month.

*From* M. DE LISIEUX *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

MY DEAR WARD,—I hope you may always find it possible to continue the kind of life which you are leading at present. It is not now for the first time that I feel persuaded that it is the only one suited to your character, and which can insensibly give you the superiority which you ought to enjoy in your own house. You have every qualification necessary for that; but circumstances have continually opposed our plans, and the necessity of incessantly varying your mode of life has given you an appearance of want of stability which you do not deserve. If you will listen to me, you will firmly resolve

to renounce the dissipations of society. I confess that, for different reasons than your mother's, I should not care much about seeing you, in your present situation, acting in comedy. I do not know whether you have any plans about that; but it is of such importance to you to busy yourself with your own affairs, with your children's interests and their education, to let your father-in-law see that your way of thinking is solid and freed from all such frivolities, that it appears to me that there is no kind of sacrifice which you ought not to make in order to succeed. I am even convinced that they will not be painful to you. Do you know that the result might possibly be that you might be left to do as you like in the matter of your children's education?

I know Mademoiselle Quinault well by reputation. I have even sometimes visited her; she really sees the best society, and you cannot do better than go there from time to time, but I should not venture to advise you to become very intimate with her. This woman, who is exceedingly witty and clever, has introduced into her house an atmosphere of freedom which may prove inconvenient, always having regard to your situation. Besides, the only thing which she really has to recommend her is the originality of her ideas. Now you know all about it; it remains for you to adopt the attitude which becomes you, if you wish to see her.

### Continuation of the Diary.

Madame de Jully has been satisfactorily delivered of a boy. I spent the next few days with her and met and made the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Quinault. She called upon me yesterday; I was not at home, but I went to see her to-day. She is exceedingly witty and clever; however, I do not know whether all her visitors do not think themselves too much under an obligation to be the same. Her age protects her character from suspicion; I am told it has not always been good: in spite of a certain affected and pedantic manner, she sometimes makes jokes which are a little risky. The qualities of her heart must be superior to those of her mind, to have caused her former position to be generally forgotten. Francueil always speaks of her as the Ninon of the century. I found M. Duclos there; he asked permission to call upon me; this request on the part of a man of such distinction as the author of the "Confessions of the Comte de * * *," while it flattered my vanity, embarrassed me, for I am afraid of his outspokenness, which, I am told, sometimes degenerates into positive rudeness; besides, I should not like my parents to know that I see Mademoiselle Quinault; my mother, who is very religious, would consider it a crime; and M. Duclos does not know the particulars.

I shall remain in Paris five or six days longer; after which I return to the country. I

shall see my children again; I am very eager to rejoin them. If I were not tormented by my separation from them, I declare that nothing could be so pleasant for me as the time I am spending alone here. I devote all my evenings to Francueil, and my mornings to Madame de Jully or other friends whom I had for some time neglected owing to my ill-health.

*Three days later.*

I had a visit yesterday from Mademoiselle Quinault. She worried me to go to dinner with her, and I could not refuse. We were only five altogether: M. le Prince de ——, the Marquis de Saint-Lambert, M. Duclos, and myself. The Marquis is exceedingly witty, and his ideas are as tasteful as they are vigorous and refined. He writes verses, and with special knowledge of the subject, for he is really a poet. It is easy to judge, from the freedom and confidence which prevail in this society, how greatly its members esteem and trust one another. An hour's conversation in this house enlarges the ideas more, and affords more satisfaction than almost all the books that I have hitherto read.

Until dessert the conversation was noisy and general. The theatre, the ballets, and the new scheme of taxation were almost the only subjects upon which the desultory conversation turned. At dessert Mademoiselle Quinault made a sign to her niece to leave the table, and she withdrew

together with the servants: she is a young girl twelve or thirteen years of age. I asked her aunt why we had enjoyed the pleasure of her society for only so short a time; in fact, she only appeared just when we were ready to sit down to dinner. "It is our custom," replied Mademoiselle Quinault; "she must not show herself." I paid her a compliment upon the promise of amiability shown by her niece, and tried to induce her to call her back. "Eh, no, if you please!" she replied. "It is quite enough that we are so kind as to restrain ourselves until dessert for the sake of the little brat. That is the time when people say all that comes into their heads, with their elbows on the table; and then children and footmen are apt to be in the way. Eh! let be, let be! We shall have trouble enough ourselves to make the tender Arbassan hold his tongue (this is the name given to M. Duclos for some reason which I do not know). We should not be able to hear each other speak, if the little one were here." "On my honour, Madame," answered M. Duclos, "you are quite wrong. I would give her all at once a correct idea of things; you have only to give me leave to do it." "Oh! I have no doubt of it," she rejoined; "but we no longer live in the times when a spade was called a spade, and it is necessary to learn in good time the language of one's age and country."

Duclos. It is not that of nature, and that is the only good language.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. Yes, if you had not corrupted it; for, in spite of its language, it has none the less for a long time striven for that thing which is called modesty.

DUCLOS. Not at the so-called modesty of our days. There are savage nations, for instance, amongst which the women remain naked until the age of puberty; and certainly they are not ashamed of it.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. As you please; but I believe that the first germs of modesty existed in man.

SAINT-LAMBERT. I believe so; time developed them; purity of morals, the disturbing influence of jealousy, the interests of pleasure—all assisted.

DUCLOS. And then education made a great fuss over those sublime virtues which are comprised under the name of "behaviour."

THE PRINCE. But there was a time when not only savages but all men went naked.

DUCLOS. Yes, truly; pell-mell, fat, plump, chubby, gay, and innocent. Let us take a drink.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT *(pouring out a glass of wine for him, and singing):*

> Il t'en revient encore une image agréable
> Qui te plaît plus que tu ne veux.

There is no doubt that the dress, which fits so admirably everywhere, is the only one that Nature has given us.

DUCLOS. Cursed be he who first thought of putting another dress over it!

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. It was some ugly little dwarf, hunchbacked, lean and deformed; for we rarely think of hiding ourselves when we are beautiful.

SAINT-LAMBERT. Whether beautiful or ugly, we have no modesty when we are alone.

I. Is that settled, Monsieur? It seems to me that I am equally modest.

SAINT-LAMBERT. It is the habit of feeling modesty in the company of others that makes us find it again when we are alone, Madame; but you will at least allow that it is useless to carry back the impressions of it home; it gradually grows weaker and becomes less scrupulous.

DUCLOS. That is certain. I swear to you that, when no one sees me, I hardly blush at all.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. And not at all when anyone is looking at you. A fine point of comparison! How modest you are, Duclos!

DUCLOS. On my honour, it is as good as any other. I wager that there is not one of you, who, when it is very hot, does not kick off all the clothes to the foot of the bed. Good-bye, then, to modesty, that beautiful virtue which we fasten on ourselves in the morning — with pins.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. Ah! there are many of those virtues in the world.

SAINT-LAMBERT. How many virtues and vices are there, which never came into question

in the code of Nature, the name of which was never written in the treatise on universal morality!

THE PRINCE. A vast number are purely conventional, according to countries, customs, and even climates. The evil which is described in the treatise on universal morality is evil everywhere. It was evil ten thousand years ago, it is evil still at the present day.

SAINT-LAMBERT. Universal morality alone is sacred and inviolable.

DUCLOS. It is the idea of order; it is reason itself.

SAINT-LAMBERT. In a word, Messieurs, it is the permanent edict of pleasure, want, and sorrow.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. That is really very fine; he talks like an oracle. Let us drink to the health of the oracle. (*They drink.*)

DUCLOS. If I were to transport myself to the beginning——

I. To the beginning?

DUCLOS. I should see the human species spread over the surface of the earth, quite naked——

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. This idea seems to take your fancy; you go back to it so often.

DUCLOS. Granted; but I wanted to say that, if anyone at that time thought of covering himself with the skin of an animal, it was because he was cold.

I. Why not from shame?

DUCLOS. At what? At being what one is?

THE PRINCE. However, there comes a time when Nature, ashamed, seems of herself to form a veil, to spread a shadow——

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. Very fine, Messieurs; this is becoming quite scientific.

SAINT-LAMBERT. If that had been the intention of Nature, she would not have waited so long; and then she also throws a veil where there is nothing to veil.

DUCLOS. Ah! if people had not veiled themselves, they would have exhibited beautiful arms, a dishevelled head, without reckoning the rest.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. It would have cost less to be more beautiful and perhaps better.

I. I think that, whatever idea be held of modesty, it cannot be separated from that of shame.

THE PRINCE. But, Madame, what is shame?

I. I cannot tell you what I understand by it, except by telling you that I am displeased with myself whenever I feel ashamed. I then feel, so to say, an eagerness for solitude, the need of concealing myself.

SAINT-LAMBERT. Very well expressed, Madame; but this dissatisfaction with yourself would not exist without the consciousness of some imperfection, that is certain. If the imperfection for which you blush is known only to yourself, the feeling of shame is brief, feeble, and transitory. On the other hand, it is lasting and painful, if the reproaches of others are united to those of your own conscience.

I. If that is so, why then do I feel relieved when I have confessed the reason of my shame?

SAINT-LAMBERT. That is because you are conscious of the merit of having confessed it. This is so true, that you would not perhaps have the courage to look at anyone who might have guessed it.

DUCLOS. That is why I confess all my faults.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. When you see that it would be no use to try and conceal them.

THE PRINCE. And then, there are faults and faults. Those which one confesses are certainly akin to a virtue. There is more to be gained than lost then.

I. If you admit that it is possible for a man to go naked without blushing, you will admit many other things.

DUCLOS. Eh! no doubt. Without the example and teaching of your mother, and your nurse's scoldings, you would have dared——

THE PRINCE. It is certainly amusing that the places inhabited by men are the only ones where we blush to obey the impulse of nature.

SAINT-LAMBERT. However, Nature is not merely respectable owing to her character of generality. As soon as she commands, she becomes the source of a mutual sympathy, of a tender friendship, of an active benevolence, the influence of which sheds itself over all the other emotions.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. It remains to be known whether all the objects which only arouse

in us so many beautiful and ugly thoughts, because they are hidden from view, would not have left us cold and unmoved if we continually gazed upon them; for there are instances of such things.

DUCLOS. Do you believe that tact would equally have lost its prerogatives?

SAINT-LAMBERT (*handing a glass to Mademoiselle Quinault with an air of enthusiasm*). Mademoiselle, I beg you, give me a glass of champagne. Messieurs, I will compose an ode for you, and you shall see that, of all human connections, the most delightful has been the most solemn. The legislator has missed his mark. Why do not the young man and the young girl present themselves? [*Here there is a lacuna in the MS.*] Why is not the sacrifice consummated under a thick veil? The most delightful perfumes would have smoked around them; the sweetest music would have drowned the cries and sighs of the youthful bride. Voluptuous and noble hymns would have been sung in honour of the gods. If they had been invoked in favour of one who was destined to be born, this act would have been invested with solemnity and importance. The bride, instead of being abandoned to feeble and timid ideas which disturb her and draw from her foolish and ridiculous tears, would fear that the gods might not bless her union, and might refuse their favours to the future fruit of her womb.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. That is what may

be called a sublime idea. It is worthy of Pindar, of Anacreon; that is the true meaning of a poet.

Duclos. Ah! by Jove! I would have gone to a wedding every day if that had been the way.

At first, I found this picture decidedly strong to be thus drawn in the presence of women who had any respect for themselves, but M. de Saint-Lambert combined with it such serious and lofty reflections, that all that was shocking in the idea soon gave place to admiration. I was dying for fear that Mademoiselle Quinault might interrupt him, as she had done at the beginning, by some ill-timed pleasantry; but, as the Marquis spoke, he seemed to communicate his enthusiasm to us, and when he had finished, we applauded him for nearly a quarter of an hour so loudly that we were unable to hear each other speak. At last the Prince took advantage of a moment's silence to resume the conversation as follows:

The Prince. How, then, in fact, did people come to make a secret of an action so natural, so necessary, and so general?

Saint-Lambert. And so delightful!

Duclos. The reason is that desire is a kind of taking possession. Man, under the influence of passion, steals away woman, like a dog who seizes a bone and carries it in his jaws until he can devour it in a corner, and, even while he devours it, turns his head and growls for fear someone may snatch it away from him. I have already said to those who will understand, that jealousy is the germ of modesty.

That was another idea that pleased me greatly; however, I could have wished that the first comparison had been more dignified.

SAINT-LAMBERT. If Nature is very enlightened, she is sometimes very foolish.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. Quite true. Come, let us drink, Messieurs.

Each of the guests took another glass of champagne. Duclos drank three in succession, and the two bottles which had been opened at the same time were emptied in a moment. Now, said the Prince, let us resume where we left off; we were talking about a dog, about a taking of possession. What the deuce was Duclos saying?

DUCLOS. On my honour, Prince, I know nothing about it. Never mind; what does it matter? I will tell you something else; it is no trouble to me.

I. Monsieur was saying that jealousy is the germ of modesty.

THE PRINCE. But . . . just one moment, Messieurs. There are other natural actions of which one makes a secret, with which, however, jealousy has nothing to do.

DUCLOS. By Jove! I believe it. A man who is more idle than vain is a shameless fellow. On my honour, all things considered, it is well to conceal oneself sometimes. The circumstances which accompany the transports of passion——

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. Hush, Duclos, hush! you are speaking pretty plainly.

DUCLOS. By heaven! I don't see it. What I am saying is quite harmless.

SAINT-LAMBERT. Madame, it must be confessed that one says nothing good of innocence unless one is somewhat corrupted.

DUCLOS. Nor of modesty, unless one is very shameless.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. That is why you speak so highly of it. Either change your subject, or speak a language we can understand.

In spite of Mademoiselle Quinault's apostrophe, the gentlemen's enthusiasm reached such a pitch that, in order to give the conversation a tone of reserve, which it was losing every instant, I ventured to say that there existed, however, a timid modesty which showed great innocence and delicacy; "and this," I added, "is, and ought to be, generally respected."

"No doubt," replied Saint-Lambert; "it is a beautiful mirror which one is afraid of tarnishing with one's breath."

However, the discussion was soon interrupted altogether by a man who brought a new piece of poetry by Voltaire; it appeared to me charming, and I think that it was criticised very severely. M. de Saint-Lambert and the Prince were the only persons who took the part of the verses and the author. After it had been read, the Prince, turning to Mademoiselle Quinault, said: "Well, Madame, what do you think of that?" "He is a ruffian," rejoined Duclos. "I do not know," said Mademoiselle Quinault,

"how far we ought to be offended with his satire, but it is impossible to attach the slightest value to his praise." "Why so?" asked M. de Saint-Lambert; "no one can praise with such grace and delicacy." "Yes," she said; "but it is not from any feeling of justice which urges him on, or affords him any satisfaction; it is to oblige one man that he speaks well of another." "He has a very pretty wit," rejoined the Prince. "Granted," said Mademoiselle Quinault; "but it is a very spiteful wit." "He is a man who cannot be trusted," interrupted Duclos; "he will one day arm a filibuster, who has nothing to lose, and will carry fire into his rich possessions —and a good thing, too.

SAINT-LAMBERT. One will never deprive him of a kindly heart.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. Ah! that is the virtue of people who have no heart at all.

SAINT-LAMBERT. It is the virtue without which there are hardly any others. Happy is the man who, on looking closely into his moral life, can find the good and the evil equally balanced! Most decidedly, Voltaire has done more real good than one has ever imagined harm in him. If you add to that a superiority of genius, such as no one can dispute with him, you will feel for him much more than indulgence, unless you decide to throw all the Poussins, Raphaels, and Guidos[1] in the fire because you have discovered

[1] All celebrated painters: the first French, the other two Italians.

a slight imperfection in one of the corners of the picture.

MADEMOISELLE QUINAULT. Let us leave that alone, and say that we must have neither near nor distant relations with such people.

It was late. I was expected at home, and took advantage of a momentary silence to withdraw, with the mental comment that, when people give themselves the trouble to destroy a useful prejudice, they ought at least to replace it by some other principles which may not only take its place, but may impose a surer restraint than that of a changeable opinion; and that, without being mad, one cannot attempt to bring man back to a state of nature.

*From* MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE *to the* CHEVALIER DE VALORY.

*La Chevrette.*

MY DEAR CHEVALIER,—How can you think that it is owing to neglect on my part that you have not heard from me? Do you not know me? do you not know that one never does here what one wants to do? With people like these, how can I get a moment's leisure? I am not at all comfortable, I swear to you. But I cannot, without marked ingratitude, leave the good old fellow, after he has shown such a desire to keep me here. Have you forgotten the 10,000 livres which they advanced me last summer? They have been twice to Paris without my knowing it, and other

opportunities did not seem safe enough for me to risk a letter. That is the reason of my silence. I hope you will not get any more such ideas into your head: understand.

Nothing is heard or talked of here except comedy. Here a part is being rehearsed; some are lording it over others, others trying on dresses or making jokes which nobody understands. I have made up my mind to be present at the rehearsals, so as to be less bored. I should have succeeded if I had had anyone to confide my remarks to. They are a troupe of lovers. In truth, the company is like a moving romance. Francueil and the little woman are as intoxicated with love as they were the first day. Gauffecourt, that sixty-year-old dwarf, does the amiable to the indolent Madame de Jully, who listens to him and quizzes him by turns. When he is quizzed, he turns to our Emilie, who pities, consoles, and fondles him, upon my honour she does, which you know is her way with people she likes. This sensitiveness comes very near the ridiculous. The idea of not being able to speak to her friends without tears in her eyes! However, it suits her. There is no doubt that she is a fascinating creature. She is not at all pretty; she is in the midst of four women famous for their beauty; and yet she effaces them all. Duclos will end by falling in love with her, if he is not already.

As for her, she only has eyes for Francueil; in spite of that, her infatuation for this Duclos is astounding. All that he says is invaluable.

Nothing is good except he approves of it; people swear by him alone. What an intellect! What a soul! Old Gauffecourt, like myself, has already told her to distrust him. Nonsense! we are unjust, we are prejudiced. She has been told of Madame de Rochefort, who was obliged to turn him out of her house, and whose reputation he ruined. "That is very different," she replied; "what authority do you mean to say he exercises over me?" "He already exercises an influence over your mind." "Well! if he shows himself wanting in respect, I shall be able to break with him without any inconvenience." "I don't know about that," replied Gauffecourt. "But I do," answered Emilie irritably; "what would you have him say?" "True or false, he will say——" "Very well, courage, papa; what a rascal, to listen to you! Really——" "Well, what, my daughter?" answered the dwarf, taking her by the hands. He is a regular dwarf, this Gauffecourt; he certainly possesses merit, but I cannot bring myself to respect a man of his position, who acts in comedy, and is only four feet high. "However that may be," he said to Emilie, "it does you harm to have suspicion thrown upon a person for whom you entertain a sincere regard. I tell you that it is not necessary to become compromised with him for him to cause great disturbance. Madame Desfontaines showed him the door after ten years' intimacy, because he turned her house upside down, and embroiled all her relations."

"Nonsense! is that true? I do not believe a word of it. Stay; that cannot be the real state of things. How do you expect me to believe that she has turned him out of her house, while she overwhelms him with tokens of friendship when she meets him? I tell you that he is the most honourable man in the world; I am positive of it .... Come, come, the rehearsal; brother, sister, Francueil, M. le Comte, M. le Marquis, the rehearsal, the rehearsal!" That is the way everything is arranged in that head of hers. I was really forgetting the best thing of all. In the midst of all this, she shuts herself up in her room for two hours every morning, to give her children their music and reading lesson herself, and to teach them their catechism. Can you make anything of that?

Madame de P * * * has just joined us. She is a fat little woman, plump and cheerful. I asked Emilie what she intended to do with her; she replied, in the simplicity of her heart, that she intended her for the part of "gossip." In anyone else's mouth but hers, this would be an epigram. I hoped that this letter would go off this evening; but I find that there will be no chance until the day after the comedy, so I shall have time to give you an account of this famous day.

### Continuation of the Same Letter.

It is certain that one cannot keep up with the changes that take place in this household.

Emilie used to make up to me for everything, because she was full of regard and attention for me, and sought my company in preference to that of all the rest. Since Duclos arrived yesterday, people have eyes for no one but him, and I am only summoned to amuse Monsieur. The comedy has served him as an excuse to get introduced to the worthy old Bellegarde. He has been wonderfully well received. He has been entreated to stay two days longer, in order to see a performance. He was not slow to take them at their word. Madame d'Esclavelles, in her reception of him, mingled the kind of respect which the reputation of being a man of wit inspires in those who have never seen anything, or who have forgotten in retirement what they have formerly seen in the world. Nevertheless, she is to a certain extent reserved, and examines the man in silence. All have a mania for taking his rudeness for frankness. But Madame de Jully, and, above all, Madame de P * * *, who are neither so infatuated with Duclos' merits, nor so sure of their talents as Madame d'Épinay, are disgusted, and will not act before him. They declare that they made it a condition that only their friends and relatives should be present at the performances; that they have no acquaintance at all with Duclos; that he is spiteful and sarcastic; in a word, they refuse to act if he remains. Thereupon the little woman makes a great fuss, tries to show that it is impossible for them to draw

back, and declares that it would be a marked rudeness to Duclos to refuse. These ladies care very little, and go their way. She praises Duclos; they laugh in her face. Being at a loss how to manage, she confided her embarrassment to me, and I could not prevent myself from laughing at her. She was inclined to get angry, but I joked her so unmercifully, that at last she became a little mollified. Her fear is that, if the piece is not played, the worthy old fellow, who is eagerly expecting the performance, will take a prejudice against Duclos. I know a way out of the difficulty, and, without boasting about it, I will make use of it before the end of the day. I will tell Duclos in confidence what a disturbance he is creating. I will tell him that Madame d'Épinay has never had the courage to speak to him about it; and I will manage to make him decide to go away, if he understands the French language in the least.

*Seven p.m.*

I was interrupted this morning, my dear Chevalier, while I was writing to you. I was obliged to go down to Madame d'Esclavelles, who wanted me to buy some linen for her; for, thank God, they make use of me for everything in this house. I had noticed Duclos walking alone in the wood; I set out to join him, firmly resolved to speak to him plainly and to put a stop, by my outspokenness, to the inconvenience he is causing us here. I approached him laughing.

"Confess, Monsieur," I said to him, "that it requires a very great amount of confidence to venture to interrupt your reveries." "Why so, Mademoiselle? Is not the garden free to all? If it pleases you to walk there with me, it does not annoy me to see you there, since I remain." "Nothing can be more natural; this tone of frankness also pleases me," I replied. "So much the better," said Duclos; "for you will never find me different." "Since you pride yourself on a quality which I esteem as highly as you do, do not be offended, Monsieur, if I adopt the same tone." "Why not? I have never annoyed anybody, seeing that I am not fond of being annoyed myself." "In this case, your penetration is at fault," I replied, laughing; "for, without suspecting it, you are acting in a manner repugnant to your way of thinking." "What! I inconvenience you!" he said hurriedly. "Why did you not say so? Really, it is your fault. Come, walk this side, I will take the other."

I assured him that he did not understand me. Taking him by the arm, I said to him, "It is not a matter which concerns myself; I even declare to you, without any silly compliments, that if I were alone in this house with the grandparents and Madame d'Épinay, you would not be at all in the way." "What do you call 'in the way?'" he said, knitting his brows. "I mean," I replied gently, "that a man like yourself is out of place in the midst of a number of

people with little brains, who, being incapable of appreciating the advantage of your society, cannot help being frightened at it." "But what have they to fear, since I am quite ready to adapt myself to their level? When I attempt to subject them to mine, then I give them leave to complain." "It would not be an easy matter," I replied maliciously. "I believe it," he said, laughing; "but I came here in no critical spirit, and I have no desire to show my superiority to anybody; besides, the one helps to support the other. Let me tell you that it is only the fool who is bored or finds himself out of place." "That is all very well as far as you are concerned; but those whom you put up with are not perhaps equally indulgent." "What the deuce is the meaning of these riddles? That is a roundabout way of saying that my presence is disagreeable to someone here. Is it yourself? for I cannot believe that it is Madame d'Épinay. It was she who pestered me to come here. In reality I believe that, surrounded by scatterbrained women and prigs, she imagined I might be a great resource to her. Naturally, I like to oblige the unhappy. This poor little woman inspires me with pity; there is good in her. I am even convinced that, if she chooses to listen to my advice, she will find herself the better for it in the long run."

As I saw that he had formed the plan of constituting himself the little d'Épinay's tutor, and as I saw a further humiliation for her in

allowing herself to be ruled by this man, I thought it necessary to lessen the interest which he already seemed to take in the matter by allowing myself to banter him a little upon his defects. There are circumstances under which we do harm to our friends by adorning them with the qualities which they possess or which we should like to recognise in them. Duclos is one of those people who, only looking for the weak side, gain the mastery more easily by the way in which they let their penetration be known. If the first feeling which he causes is favourable to his intellect, I believe that fear would be the next. Greater familiarity with men than the little d'Épinay possesses is certainly necessary in order to judge a man like Duclos.

"I should be of your opinion," I replied, "in regard to Madame d'Épinay, if she had learnt early to distinguish true friends from frivolous acquaintances; but what can you expect from one whose caprices are continually stifling his reason? She of whom we are speaking was made to understand it. I must do justice to her sensitive heart." "The deuce, Mademoiselle! Is this nothing, then, in your opinion?" "Much," I replied, "when one knows how to regulate its movements; little, when everything is equally able to move it. It is necessary to know how to draw distinctions, and that is not Madame d'Épinay's strong point." To this Duclos replied that it was only from continued weakness that one gained nerves. "Everything has its proper

time," he added; "to know the true, one must have seen the false." "It has not been my fault that she has not appreciated the danger; being shrewder than her, I would have kept her from dangerous conduct, if she had been disposed to listen to friendly advice; but, being given up to this company of giddy-brained creatures whom you see here, she is afraid to refuse them anything, and the fear of displeasing them draws her on to the extent of showing a want of consideration even towards those who are best disposed towards her." "But," said Duclos, "I do not see that she is wanting in respect to anybody; it even seems to me that she exercises a certain discernment in the choice of her friends, for I do not think that she reckons in that category all those who are here. I must do her the justice of saying that she shows a desire to attract to her society people of merit, which does credit to her understanding."

I could hardly prevent myself from laughing at this self-conceit, which I appreciated immensely; but my gaiety was not agreeable to Duclos, who asked in a coldly insolent tone what I found so amusing in what he had just said. Pretending that I had not noticed his ill-temper, I said, "Because, what you think our little woman wanted the day before yesterday, when she brought you here, is the very thing that she most fears today." "May I die if I understand anything of this rigmarole!" he replied, shrugging his shoulders. "For heaven's sake, Mademoiselle, let us speak

plainly! Why am I not wanted any longer?" "Because they are afraid of you." "For what reason?" "Because they are alarmed at the idea of your criticisms. It is a question of performing a comedy, as you know." "Well, why not tragedy, if they like? I will applaud; everything is good incidentally." "They will never suppose you will be so indulgent; and—you might let fall some sarcastic remarks. From that moment, good-bye to their humble talents." "On the contrary, Mademoiselle, nothing is so encouraging as the presence of connoisseurs. Is it not they who educate the rest? Then, if I jest, they are quite at liberty to do the same. Come, I am fairer than they imagine." "I am convinced of it; but they have not had time to examine your character thoroughly." "Tell me," he interrupted, "does the performance take place to-morrow?" "That depends," I answered with a smile. "What are the pieces?" "Oh! I know nothing about it; I do not trouble myself about their repertory. The object of my presence here is not the comedy; if it were not for M. de Bellegarde and poor Madame d'Épinay, who, without me, would be alone in the midst of the world of fashion, I should not swell the number of the audience. The excitement and confusion which amusements of this kind bring in their train do not suit heads like yours and mine. I believe that if we had to choose our own society, it would not be that of a young woman. I only value friends whose outspokenness can correct me,

if I need it; whose upright and enlightened intelligence instructs and at the same time amuses me; persons without airs or affectation, who know and enjoy as well as myself the charm of a friendship which is inspired by merit, and is kept up by consistent affinity of character." "What!" said he, knitting his brows and looking slyly at me, "I thought you were fond of Madame d'Épinay?" "And who tells you the contrary, Monsieur? Because I blame her conduct, and do not like to see her beset by a crowd of insignificant creatures, who do even more harm to her reputation than they promote her enjoyment, is that insulting her? I think, Monsieur, that in friendship it is necessary——" "Stop, Mademoiselle," he interrupted angrily, "everyone must do as he pleases." "What, Monsieur, you consider everything harmless?" "I consider everything good, except what is bad, however." "In this case, what do you say?" "What! because she plays in a comedy. Eh! good heavens! I will play in it as much as you like. Here, tell them that; that will put an end to their fears. They can not only feel sure of a desirable spectator in me, but I am even ready, to put them at their ease, to take any part they like; it will be the very deuce if I don't act as well as they."

I confess that I could not prevent myself from showing some surprise. My object in speaking to him had certainly not been to draw him into sharing an amusement which I thought he would condemn. "What! you would act

with them?" "Certainly; they must be reassured. Besides, as I came here for Madame d'Épinay's sake, I am very glad that she should see that I can be quite as obliging as anyone else. Come, come; I wager she will be very glad of it." "Not at all," I replied angrily. "What! you refuse to listen to me?" "What then have I been doing for the last hour? I do not know; but let me tell you, since I must speak plainly, that it is Madame d'Épinay herself who requests, as politely as possible, that you will put off to another time the short stay you intended to make here, seeing that all have agreed that they will not perform as long as you are here. Your presence alarms the fine ladies, and freezes with alarm those who are agreeable, which puts the mistress of the house in an awkward position." "So then this is what is the matter? Leave me alone; I will arrange matters so that everybody shall be satisfied. Truly, I am the sort of man to inconvenience people! They do not know me; it is always mediocrity of talent that makes people timid. I am off to tell Madame d'Épinay to make herself easy. With me, there is no need to fear mischief-making or blunders; but it is necessary to learn to be master in one's own house; in two words, I shall have smoothed over all difficulties. Really, I do not wish people to be afraid of me in this house. Zounds! it is esteem that I want, and it will be easy for me to prove to them that I deserve it."

I do not know all that he has not yet told

me; what I believe is, that he is in love with the little d'Épinay; I have sounded Gauffecourt on that point. He thinks that Duclos has immediately recognised the good, timid, and weak character of the little woman; and that, as he is fond of domineering, he wants to gain her confidence and an influence over her mind, and to be her guide. "Yes," I replied, "and perhaps, without anyone suspecting it, to make her the instrument for carrying out his tricks." "That is it exactly; but, if that is his object, I hope that he will not succeed; for Francueil, from whom she conceals nothing, will not permit her to embark upon such a course. I even hope to be able to make him feel that his interest is involved. I see that, without noticing it, I am almost as much taken up with this affair as all the rest; it is a disease which is catching. But let us leave them for a moment, and talk about ourselves."

I had a letter from your brother yesterday; I am extremely pleased to find that he is not satisfied with my refusal; he renews his importunities that I should go and spend the autumn with them. I await your opinion in order to —— They are calling me again. It is impossible to get a moment's peace here. What a life! Adieu, then, my dear Chevalier. This time, I shut up my letter, and I will let you know the date of the performance.

Madame d'Épinay's confidence in Mademoiselle d'Ette prevents anything appearing in her

diary which throws a clear light upon the character and cunning of this young woman. Whether from her straitened circumstances, or the natural fickleness of her character, it is certain that she was endeavouring to form new ties more useful than those which bound her to the Chevalier de Valory. The result has convinced us that this was the chief object of her persistent attentions to M. de Bellegarde. Amongst those who were attracted by the amusements which his children provided for him, she sought especially to please such as had an established reputation for wealth and generosity, but always in such a manner as not to compromise herself. She tried to manage Duclos, probably with the intention of deceiving rather than leading him astray; but finding that she did not meet with corresponding success, she conceived a most decided hatred against him.

*Note from* MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE *to the* CHEVALIER DE VALORY.

You are expected the day after to-morrow, my dear Chevalier. Everything is arranged. This Duclos is a magician, I think; all these women are madly in love with him now. The other day, after our conversation—which, as far as I can judge from your letter, you do not approve of, although I do not know why—Duclos returned to find out exactly who were the "startled doves" of the company; such was the phrase he used.

I mentioned quite frankly the fat Marquise and the little de Jully. He went immediately to their apartments. I do not know how he managed it, but, when we were all assembled again in the drawing-room, the company no longer called him anything else but the "good fellow," and I believe that the name will stick to him. In short, the performance takes place the day after to-morrow and in his presence. They beg for his approbation, and would, I believe, play on purpose for him if they dared. They offer you a bed, but, as there is a large number of visitors, you will perhaps do well not to accept it. In everything else do just as you please. Good-bye, my old friend.

THE DIARY RESUMED.

*September 1st*, 1750.

M. Duclos has managed to get introduced to my father-in-law, as we had agreed. He was received very kindly. I was afraid that, in the course of conversation, he might let fall some remark which would reveal my new connection with Mademoiselle Quinault; but, in spite of his liveliness, he is more discreet than I had imagined. M. de Bellegarde has invited him to stay some days here and see the performance of the comedy. He has accepted the invitation. The ladies at first raised difficulties about playing before him; this greatly embarrassed me, but Mademoiselle d'Ette, with her usual cleverness, has put everything straight. Truly, I ought to be very grateful to

her; she thinks of no one but me. She keeps me constantly informed of anything that may do me harm; she is more affected by it than I am myself. There are very few friends like her.

Francueil is very pleased with M. Duclos and the interest which he takes in me. As for myself, up to the present moment, I esteem him greatly; his society affords me pleasure, and yet I do not find him very amiable. He amuses me sometimes. I like to listen to him; but he makes me feel awkward, and I never know what to say to him. I do not always find myself of the same opinion as he is. I never hesitate to give in to him, and I do myself justice. Besides, Francueil and M. Rousseau think very highly of him; in addition to this, he seems to take pleasure in my society, and I enjoy his satisfaction. What is there unseemly in that? It is vanity, pure and simple, I admit. I do not know what to do. I think and feel all that I have just said. For instance, I am much more at my ease with M. de Gauffecourt. He has often told me that I have more sense than people believed and than I myself believed. He says that I only need training and the habit of talking with people who will oblige me to think. If that is the case, no one is better fitted than M. Duclos to supply my deficiencies. The following conversation took place between us the day before the performance.

We were walking together. After a full quarter of an hour's silence—our conversations always commence by intervals of silence; I should like

to know why — "Well!" said Duclos to me, laughing; "so these ladies were afraid of me; they did not want to act." "Not afraid, Monsieur; but it had been generally agreed between us not to perform before any stranger." "Granted; but I—— Did you not tell them? . . . On the contrary, they ought to expect more indulgence from a man who knows all about it."

I was really shocked at this expression, but I did not venture to let him see it, for fear of humiliating him. I replied, against my feelings, "That is true."

"Everything has been set right," he continued. "You will perform to-morrow. But, why did you not tell me of the embarrassment it caused you?" "Because I did not know whether these ladies would hear of it, and I was afraid of putting you in the position of being obliged to leave us from politeness." "Not I! I should not have left, and besides—they would have acted, I felt sure of it. You see. Ah! you do not know me. You must always speak naturally to me. You will learn that, if you will permit me to pay my respects to you. . . . Not so much this summer, for I shall be obliged to make a short stay with the Duchesse de ——, and then a fortnight during the Fontainebleau;[1] that is all. After that, I am at your disposal here, if you are at home. Send me a note to inform me of an opportunity. I will put my nightcap and a book in my pocket

[1] The visit of the Court to Fontainebleau, which took place in October every year.

and come and spend two or three days with you." "Ah! Monsieur, you will afford me the greatest pleasure." "Really? you see I speak quite frankly to you. I am enjoying myself very much here; you are a good woman . . . . I say that you are a woman of intelligence, more so than one usually finds in a society woman. Listen: when I say a good woman, I mean an honest woman, a woman of intellect who fulfils her duties. Ask Mademoiselle Quinault. What I like in you is your respect, your affection for your parents."

I did not know what answer to make to all that he said. Except for its familiarity, his praise pleased me. Seeing that I continued silent, he went on. "Hm! was I mistaken? do you not love them?" "Yes, most assuredly, with all my heart, Monsieur." "See, Madame, I am taking with you the tone which friendship and sincerity have prompted. Perhaps it is displeasing to you; you have only to say so." "No, Monsieur, certainly not; I feel only too flattered." "Come then, imitate me," he continued. "Look, you can say anything you like with me. Come, go on; do this, do that. . . . Yes, in all sincerity, I am the easiest man in the world to get on with. Everyone will tell you so, and—— I will even tell you one thing myself. I have been on an intimate footing in twenty houses in Paris; I venture to say a perfectly intimate footing, one which may be called . . . . in short, even to the extent of being in the confidence of the husband and wife at the same time. I have been mixed up

with several people. I believe no one has ever repented giving me their confidence; and if . . . I have been told things which, if I liked . . . But on that point I have never allowed myself to be persuaded . . . . This clearly proves my honourable character. Knowing how hasty I am, and that, by heaven! it is not as a rule prudent to hamper oneself with a person like me, they have had the impudence not to humour me at all."

Here we were interrupted; but this was nearly all that he said worth mentioning.

The next day we performed the comedy. If I can believe all that is said in my praise, no one ever showed more distinct talent. I could believe Duclos, for he is straightforward, and is not prejudiced like Francueil, who was mad and intoxicated with delight. Duclos declares that I only want practice to become the finest actress that he has seen. All my relations wept for joy.

*Paris: the following day.*

We left la Chevrette this morning—Duclos, Francueil, and myself. I pretended I had some business for M. d'Épinay; they would hardly let me go. I believe, in truth, that they are all in love with me. I dined alone with Francueil, and, as he cannot sup with me, I invited Duclos to come and keep me company, and he accepted my invitation. He is to be here about eight o'clock.

CONTINUATION OF THE DIARY.

Instead of coming at eight o'clock, as we had agreed, he came at seven, and found me with Francueil, who had only just come in and had intended to remain until he arrived.

I was a little annoyed at the hour he made me lose; and, now that I am alone and able to reflect upon our conversation, I think that it would have been better that he should not have come at all. I had prepared the most admirable conversation, and I was unable to remember a single word of it. I had said to myself: "The best way to secure Duclos' friendship is to make him respect me and sympathize with my lot. I have only to show myself to him such as I really am, and to conceal from him nothing of all that has happened to me, with the exception of the mutual affection which Francueil and myself have for each other, which there is no necessity to tell him. I will get him upon the subject of apparent happiness; I will tell him how false and deceptive it is. This will rouse his curiosity; he will ask me questions, and I shall only have to answer." This admirable scheme failed entirely; but I am sure that you would never guess the subject of conversation that took its place.

On his arrival, he informed me that he would not take any supper. I was not hungry; I ordered some stewed fruit, bread, wine, and water to be brought for myself, and some cracknels and beer for him; and this, at eight o'clock, because it so pleased him. This frugal repast was set upon

my table, and we seated ourselves on either side, leaning on our elbows.

At first we talked about the comedy and my talents, which he praised without ceasing. At last I said to him, "All this is only satisfactory when one can enjoy it without disagreeable reflections. One's thoughts must be quite free." "We also performed a comedy in a society to which I belonged," he answered. "I did very well; I played the footman. There was a little maid who, by heavens! was charming . . . That was the reason why I played the footman." "Why did we not know that sooner?" I said to him, "you should have acted with us."

He went on, without seeming to hear me: "I was in love with the maid, who was charming, and"—here he smiled and looked hard at me—"we both of us played our part very well." He was silent for a moment, and then continued, laughing: "I have had some curious adventures in my life—I may say unique, you would hardly believe them." I did not answer a word; I smiled and looked surprised; I might say that I was playing attention. However, I was really all ears; I was on the watch for the word which would bring me to what I wanted to talk about.

"I am writing a novel[1] at the present moment," he said, "in which will appear things—quite strange and true. Yes, by heavens! you shall see it. I will read you some of it." "Ah! please do." "Yes, certainly, that I

[1] This is supposed to refer to the *Mémoires sur les mœurs du dix-huitième siècle.*

promise you; but you ought to know . . . Ah! that does not matter . . . There is one instance amongst others in which I behaved most honourably," he continued, shaking his head. "I am certain that, in my place, there are not two men who would have acted as I did, or could even, in cold blood, guarantee to do the same."

I confess that, if anything could make me suspicious of Duclos, it would be the care he takes to boast of his honourable conduct; but, as he seems to be warmly enthusiastic about everything, this is less surprising. For this reason I replied to him, "You ought to be well avenged in thinking as you do. Honourable conduct covers with much more confusion those who are guilty of certain offences. It is an experience which I have had the good or bad fortune to go through." "Poor woman!" he said, with an air of sympathy, "so young! just tell me; your mother appears to me a worthy woman." "Ah! Monsieur, she is the most worthy mother, the most——" "Yes, yes; I think so too. Does she bore you much?" "Me? Not in the least. In what could she bore me?" "Well, I mean, is she exacting, inquisitive? She seems to me very religious!" "Yes, extremely." "How the deuce then comes she to let you act in a comedy?" "She is not altogether pleased at it; it is M. de Bellegarde who wishes it, and so, as a favour to him and a necessary evil attached to her condition, she consents." "Very good; she could offer it

to God, in case of need." "Exactly; and, in truth, I also could do so, very often." "How? why so?" "Good heavens! why?" "What! you do not act as one who does not make a pleasure of it; if it is from religious considerations, I imagine that you would have scruples about it, for, by heavens! one does not see you play with impunity;" here he smiled comically. "By such objects souls are troubled, and this makes guilty thoughts arise."[1] "No, it is neither from religious scruples nor prudery; but it is necessary to be cheerful, to have one's heart at ease." "Ah! that is another matter; if you suffer, I pity you from my soul. You do not deserve it. And what is it that causes it?"

I did not answer. Then, knitting his brows in token of sympathy, he said, "Madame, I take a very keen interest in you; this gives me a right to your confidence. You may tell me everything." Then, looking fixedly at me, he continued, "Poor woman! where is your husband?" "He has been four months away on circuit, Monsieur." "I have heard speak of him; he is young. I wish to make his acquaintance. I strongly suspect that he is the cause of your sorrow. But, what the deuce——" "It is true, Monsieur, that he has caused me much grief." "I should like a drink," he said, taking the bottle of beer; "will you have some?" "No; thank you very much," I answered; "I will take some stewed fruit immediately." "And I this piece of crust. Another drink, and I have

[1] From Molière, *le Tartuffe*, Act iii., sc. 2.

finished. You are in weak and delicate health?" "Yes, very weak, especially during the last two years." "All young women are in a dying condition; why don't you drink some wine? I tell you, as I tell them all, that it would strengthen you. M. d'Épinay is in good health, eh?" "Yes." "Just tell me, Madam, what sort of person is Mademoiselle d'Ette?" "A young woman of good family who has no fortune; an estimable, most estimable person, and my dearest friend." "Really? And what is she doing here? How did you come to know her?" "She was a friend of my mother." "I understand. I see the rest from this moment. There is no need to tell me so much. She is a gay young woman, or I am much mistaken." "She? Oh no; I assure you." "Hm! hm! I am a pretty good judge. She is very pliable, very clever, eh?" "She is certainly very shrewd, but——" "Yes, yes; I knew it. Let us say no more about that. Ah! you have had a number of children? that has been your death." "No, Monsieur; I have only two." "I have seen a poor little woman like that, whose friend I was, who has had more trouble. You no longer live with your husband when he is at Paris?"

This question surprised me, even displeased me; but I did not venture to let him see it, since it was evidently dictated by sympathy and frankness. I did not hesitate to answer him, with equal frankness, "No." After that he began to ponder; took two or three drinks with an

air of preoccupation, and at last broke the silence by saying, "Perhaps I may be of some service to you. One of these days, when we are taking a walk, you must tell me all that you have in your mind . . . Do you walk much?" "Yes; I am very fond of it." "Well, then, we will go to the Meute;[1] I have rooms there; it is very nice. Mademoiselle Quinault and Madame de Rochefort furnished them for me; but I have a plan. I will see—— Nearly all my acquaintances are in these quarters, and if I pay my respects to you often——" "Ah, Monsieur, you will give me so much pleasure . . . I shall be under great obligation to you . . ." "Even if I gain your parents' favour," he continued, "if you think that my presence—— Sometimes a word from me may—— You see, I must be within reach of you. I want to get some rooms provided for me in the Tuileries; but I do not want to give up these at the Meute. I shall be easily able to do this through Madame de Pompadour, with whom I am on very friendly terms, and, meanwhile, the Abbé de C——, who is my friend, will lend me his. I have only to say a word to him, or to get the Princesse de G—— to ask him. I enjoy their confidence; they will refuse me nothing. And both know that I enjoy it. It is a singular thing. I would not mention it unless everybody knew it. Besides, they have not

[1] Now called La Muette, a house in the Bois de Boulogne, in which Duclos had rooms by virtue of his position as historiographer.

asked me the secret of it. The Princess treats it very lightly, quite in the fine lady style, as it is called. She is proud and courageous; she has behaved wonderfully with the Abbé; I say as well as was possible. She has told him everything and myself too, with a frankness which made me respect her — the very first time we saw her. For, in such matters, I will tell you that I do not consider it a sin for a woman to have a lover; quite the contrary; but I wish her to have the courage to confess openly the preference which she gives him. As for her favours, let her conceal them; that pleases me well enough. But I believe that, when affection is very lively, it is difficult to manage to conceal it; it would be more prudent; but—— Let us take another drink. (*Silence.*) You no longer love your husband, from what I can judge." "Alas, Monsieur! he has driven me to it. (*Another silence*). I was very unhappy before I reached the point of indifference with which I now regard him."

Then he came towards me, and, holding out his hand with an air of emotion, kissed mine, and said, "Poor little woman, you have a tender soul. How is it that your husband does not appreciate your worth? Tell me now, do you love anyone at present?" "Monsieur . . . I have friends who console me, who make it up to me, and whom I love dearly——" He interrupted me, and again kissed my hand. He then sat down again, poured out a glass of beer,

took a turn at the window, and came back, saying, "I would give anything to see you happy." Then, after he had drunk his beer, he added, "I am very fond of you." I bowed by way of thanks. Then he came towards me suddenly, with outstretched arms, and said, "See, Madame, I am in love with you. I feel that I shall become madly in love with you. I am an honourable man; but I don't want to be deceived. Tell me the truth, you will never regret your confidence. You have only to say a word." "Monsieur, I am extremely flattered by your way of thinking. Keep your friendship for me, I earnestly beg you; but I should be very sorry for you to have any other feeling for me." "And why so? Do you find me disagreeable? Listen; you might do worse. On my honour, I already look upon you as my child." Then, taking me by the hands, he said, "Why could you not love me?" "I could not possibly help feeling great friendship for you, if only out of gratitude . . ."

At first this abrupt declaration had astonished me; it had even appeared ridiculous to me; but he seemed so frank and sincere that I felt annoyed at the desire to laugh with which it had inspired me at the first moment.

"I cannot express," I continued, "how grateful I am for the affection which you show for me. In truth, I am touched by it; you are full of kindness towards me; but, Monsieur, are friendship and gratitude sufficient for you? I have nothing to give beyond that." "Madame,

one more question," he said, squeezing my hands, "and I will say no more about it; but I want a precise, clear, and, above all, a true answer. Remember that. Have you a lover?"

I felt considerable hesitation in replying. "Monsieur," I said, "why this question? No. I have some friends, as I have told you. I have one amongst the rest who loves me tenderly; that is all." "You are deceiving me. Come, I do not wish to force your secret; you have confidence in me; I warn you that half-confidences do not suit me at all. Tell me; I do not wish to make any explanation; it is done with; or speak to me plainly."

I should certainly have liked to conceal from him my love for Francueil; but, at the same time, I reproached myself for not returning the friendship which he showed me, and for not telling him what I felt no doubt he would learn almost immediately, if he continued to live in our circle for ever so short a time. It appeared to me that I ought at least to have the credit of confidence and good faith in dealing with him. Accordingly, after a little reflection, I said to him, "It is true, Monsieur, that I love, and love passionately." While I was speaking, I did not venture to look at him, I kept my eyes fixed on the ground, while he clasped my hands tightly. "That," I said, "is the first time I have confessed it. I do not conceal from you that it is painful to me; and, besides, I do not know whether he whom I love will approve

of it." "And who is it? I wager that it is M. de Francueil." "It is true." "I suspected as much. Madame, it is done with; I will never in my life speak to you of my love again. I also want you to give me your word of honour that you will not say a word about it. I wish you not to open your mouth about it either to M. de Francueil or to anyone else." "You may rest assured of that, Monsieur, if you do not mention it to me again." "But, at least remember, I should never forgive you; such things are sacred." "Monsieur, I should be in despair if I caused you the least pain." (We give such promises in all sincerity; but, good heavens! what a hurry we are in to break them. The first thing I did was to tell everything to Francueil). Duclos questioned me about my lot. I told him all that had happened to me without concealment. He showed great sympathy with my troubles. He says that he has plans for being of use to me with my relatives, above all, with my husband, and in society, where he declares that I have need to be puffed. I am not surprised at it, for I can easily imagine that my husband has not spared me there any more than in his family.

## CHAPTER VI.

(1750-1751.)

Francueil arrived at twelve o'clock, a quarter of an hour after Duclos had left. I should have been annoyed if the latter had seen him return so late. We talked till half-past one. I gave him an account of all that had taken place, with the exception of my confession of our love, because he anticipated me by saying eagerly, "At least you did not tell him the footing on which we stand?" The tone and manner with which he spoke shut my mouth; but it seems to me, however, that I could not have done otherwise than confess our love to Duclos. He is so frank, so honourable, and he is so fond of me! Should I not have been essentially wanting in respect to him, if I had denied what it is impossible that he should fail to perceive? Nevertheless, I feel ill at ease. I have done a thing which displeases Francueil, and it cannot be remedied. I must therefore tell him. I shall wait till I am in the country, that I may be in a better position to make him speedily forget my mistake, or to console him for it.

*From* M. DE LISIEUX *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

It is impossible to escape one's destiny. Of all the ill-considered steps that you may have taken in your life, this is the most dangerous and the one that grieves me more than any other; but the mischief is done. What would you have me say to you, my dear ward? I respect and revere your beautiful soul, its candour, its sense of security; and I tremble lest you should fall a victim to this. You are allowing yourself to be imposed upon by the show of honesty and good nature. I have no reason to regard Duclos as a dishonourable man: quite the contrary; but he wants to be master. His pride makes him a tyrant, and I know for a certainty that it is difficult to get out of his power after having once allowed him to assume authority. Even if it led to nothing more than the awkwardness of a rupture with a celebrated man, in whom the public, without exactly knowing why, does not allow itself to imagine the possibility of doing wrong, it would still be highly inconvenient. It is equally inconvenient that you have been obliged to listen to his ridiculous declaration; for such you would have found it on the part of anyone else, and if you had been less influenced by the pretended interest which he takes in you.

I should much like to know what your mother thinks of it: you have said nothing to me about

it. It seems to me a difficult task to repair your indiscretion. Try, however, my dear Emilie, I beseech you, to remedy it as far as possible. I am convinced, for instance, that you will never allow him to speak to you of M. de Francueil, or to remind you of the confidence which you ought never to have reposed in him. I am more grieved at all this than I can tell you. Do you fully understand what is assumed by the courage needed to make such a confession to one unknown or so new an acquaintance, and what is the part you have played with him? What a turn of affairs! what intrigue! Is your reputation to be bound up with all these idle words? I, who know you, have no desire to judge you too severely; but what opinion can Duclos himself have of you?

Good-bye, my dear ward; I should have liked to write more consolingly to you; but it is not from a man, who knows what true frankness is, and who, all his life, will only profess that which is likely to contribute to your happiness, that you ought to expect it.

### Continuation of the Diary.

Our festivities are at last over, and we shall return to the state of repose of which I begin to be in need. I am tired of this noise and bustle, and, the more I think of it, the more I prefer solitude.

M. de Bellegarde has received a letter from

my husband, in which I see, from certain ambiguous expressions cleverly thrown in, that he still accuses my mother and myself of being responsible for his separation. However, it is an annoying opinion. M. de Bellegarde felt this, and told me, of his own accord, that he clearly saw that it was necessary to think of carrying out the plans which he has formed, as much in my children's interest as my own. I told him in reply that our future was in his hands, and that he might have observed that I no longer disturbed or troubled myself about it since he had given me his word to provide for it. This was said in Duclos' presence. In the afternoon we went for a walk—he, Mademoiselle d'Ette, Francueil, and myself. For some time the conversation was general. Afterwards, Duclos offered me his arm; and, as he showed, by his absent-mindedness and uneasiness, that he had something to say to me, Mademoiselle d'Ette took Francueil's arm, and they walked on at a little distance from us. I do not know whether I see Duclos with different eyes, or whether he kept himself in check before; but, at present, his frankness appears to me very little removed from brutality.

"Well," said Duclos, "is it this letter, which papa-in-law gave you, which takes up your attention so much that you do not see that I am here? You forget that you intend to tell me its contents." "What should I have to say to you, Monsieur, that you do not know already?—unjust

suppositions, ambiguous expressions, ridiculous threats, from which you have heard that M. de Bellegarde intends to protect me." "Yes, for he is a good man. He is perhaps the first man without genius in whom I have observed sensible qualities; however, you must not trust to that entirely." "Why? I am under sufficient obligations to him for him to have a right to my entire confidence. He is my support and my only resource." "Granted; but he is the father of the man who has caused you much sorrow, to say nothing more. It needs a great deal to console you for all that. What! what is the matter with you?" "Nothing, Monsieur." "You seem to be ill at ease. Are you tired?" "No, Monsieur, not at all." "Well, what the deuce! let us walk on, then. I wish I were M. de Bellegarde myself; you should see how I would deal with your husband. Who has ever seen——? Complaints—complaints. I would say to him, 'My friend, when a man is a profligate without any delicacy, it is unfair on his part not to be indulgent towards honourable weaknesses. Plunge into debauchery, since it pleases you; I am quite agreeable; but, by heavens! leave your wife alone, for you will gain nothing but misery and wretchedness.'" "For shame! this language would be as hard for me as for him." "Say, just; but—all that—there is not one of them who sees—first impressions are deucedly strong. Consider! in spite of his conduct, which is enough to disgust one, have you not had the greatest trouble in the world to bring

yourself to prefer Francueil to him? All these struggles, all this childishness, these romantic alarms of a weak head and a heart quite fresh—— I am certain—— At present, if you took a fancy to love another, you would act more frankly, would you not? By the way—well, how is the establishment getting on?" "What establishment, Monsieur?" "Why, you and the man whom d'Ette is wheedling down yonder. I am willing to believe that it is for love of you, for I am naturally neither inclined to think ill nor a mischief-maker." "I think so." "What do you mean by 'I think so'? You are not sure of it. But what the deuce is the matter with you, then? Your preoccupied air, your brief answers, your embarrassment—look here, there is no doubt about it, you have something on your mind which it is right that I should know." "I assure you that I have nothing at all on my mind." "Is it this letter? is it the husband? Well, papa-in-law will answer the one, and I promise you for myself that, when I see the other, I will speak plainly to him in a manner that will make him leave you alone, or he shall tell me the reason why." "Oh, no; I beg you, do not do that. Listen, I have thought of it since; such interest in me would do me more harm than you imagine. You cannot judge of that as I can. And then, you are a stranger to my husband." "A good reason, by Jove! I shall begin by proving to him that I am your intimate friend." "Do you not see that that will only make him less inclined to listen

to you?" "Do you think me a fool? Do you imagine that, as soon as I see him, I am going to reproach him with his pranks, as if I were his tutor? It is of you that I shall speak to him. Let me alone. I will soon secure you a very different reputation from that which you have gained from the society you keep." "What then? You imagine——" "I imagine nothing. I see everything, and I say that you are under government, and that you are none the better for it. When one adopts the tone of everyone else, one is inconsistent, I warn you of it." "Before discussing this theory, let us return to my husband, if you are agreeable." "Everything has been said on this subject. I will tell him truths; either he will be angry, or he will not; but, most certainly, he will fear me and respect you the more in consequence. Ah! when I take an interest in anyone, he can sleep quietly." "No, no; I beg you. . . . I am truly touched by your zeal, but I assure you that it is very important for me to do nothing. Let us leave M. de Bellegarde to act. When all the drafts of the deeds are drawn up, and precautions have been taken for the future, it will be time to oppose the assistance of friendship to the resentment of M. d'Épinay. I promise you that I will then confidently solicit the proofs of that friendship which you show to me to-day." "Yes, I understand. You will consult me when all is finished. This seems rather like an attempt at evasion. That does not suit me; I see that you feel uncertain. Poor

woman! are they always going to frighten you whenever they like?" "It is my knowledge of the characters of those with whom I have to deal that renders necessary the caution which you condemn. Believe me, too great eagerness would spoil everything." "But who the deuce speaks to you about eagerness? It is activity that I am preaching to you. In truth, they are not well provided with it. Your mother is a good and worthy woman, after her fashion, who does not dare to support you; M. de Bellegarde is a good sort of fellow, but weak; your brothers-and sisters-in-law are a lot of giddy-pates." "Monsieur!" "Well! what, Monsieur? You laugh, but there is no doubt about it; d'Ette appears to you an eagle by comparison; she has got round you. Believe me, she is thinking more of herself than of you." "She? Oh! I protest——" "I neither swear nor protest, but I have good eyes. Ah! ask me, ask me. I have seen some things in my time. I see that she advises you, and advises you wrongly, and I would tell her that much at least, without the least hesitation, just as I tell you." "I believe that you are mistaken; I am even quite sure of it." "The only person amongst your friends who I see has any common sense is Francueil; he might have been able to give you some sensible advice; but one cannot be judge and party in one's own case." "I assure you, Monsieur, that you wrong Mademoiselle d'Ette." "The deuce! you reproach me far more than you believe." "What!" "Yes,

yes. In any case, I have to reproach you for the bad use you make of my friendship. Ah! if you take me for a puppet!" "In truth, I do not know——" "If anyone thinks to make a teetotum of me, he is mistaken. I will let them see, by Jove!" "But what is it you mean to say?" "I understand, I understand well enough. At first you thought that I deserved your confidence, and you were right; I was grateful to you for it." "I hope that I shall not have cause to regret it," I said with some embarrassment. "On the contrary, Madame, I believe that you would find it far more to your disadvantage to withdraw it," he replied, knitting his brows: "in any case, tell those who give you this advice that they do not understand either your interest or their own." "That is an assumption which you have no right to make, Monsieur. The good faith with which I have acted proves my confidence in your principles." "That is a just conclusion, and the first sensible thing you have said all day; you must not alter again." "But the silence which I advise you to maintain with M. d'Épinay is no alteration. Think——" "That is enough. I see to what I must limit myself. Trust to me; I will act as your friend, and in accordance with your views. You have heard of the value of my efforts when I give myself the trouble to make them. Come, let us rejoin Francueil and d'Ette. How restless that girl is! that is the tenth time she has turned her head round. Come, no more trifling; trust to me.

We rejoined our friends, and all four returned to the château together. This conversation occupied us nearly the whole of the walk; it is impossible for me to recall all the details of it, but the above is the abstract of it, which has often recurred to me on different occasions. Duclos was to leave the following day. He came into my rooms as soon as he knew that I was up, and settled himself there until eleven o'clock. He asked me a thousand questions about my companions.

### Continuation of the Diary.

*Eight days later.*

I shall never get out of difficulty by being reserved with Duclos. I have already seen his works, and I am going to tell you the conversation which he had with me concerning Rousseau. "By the way," he said to me (this "by the way" referred to nothing), "I wanted to ask you—how long have you known Rousseau?" "Nearly a year. I owe the pleasure of his acquaintance to M. de Francueil." "What? to play in comedy? It would have been better to make use of him for something else, for he is a wretched actor." "That is true; but one ought to be grateful to him for being so obliging." "Obliging? that is something new for him. Take advantage of it while the fit is on him, or rather, do not get accustomed to little attentions on his part; for I warn you that he is not a ladies' man." "What do you mean by that?" "Oh! those good people

who adapt themselves to your amusements as long as you please; who save you from scandal, instead of scandalising you; who approve of everything and require nothing; in short, such a man as I should be, if you were mistress in your own house." "I do not see that the obligations imposed upon me by my relatives deprive me of the liberty of making life pleasant for my friends. I do not believe," I added, laughing, "that you found yourself bored at my house."

Duclos, who is so sharp to understand, either did not or pretended not to understand my meaning, for he replied, "I am not speaking of myself, Madame, and the proof that I am very comfortable here is that I come here and I remain here." "Can Rousseau have made any complaints to you? That would surprise me." "He? not at all; he knows too well whom he has to deal with to come to me with complaints about persons whom he knows I like, and he is too clever not to spare them with others." "Ah! as for that, no one could be cleverer." "The deuce! you have noticed that? The public does not see as clearly as you, but, give him time, and you will find this man create a deuce of a stir." "I am surprised that, with all the resource his talents might be to him, his situation is still so unhappy. Why doesn't he write?" "Give him time to recognise what he is worth. What the deuce would you have him write? One must be happy in order to write well; without that one can never produce anything good. But, at least, I have

told him: it is perhaps rather his own fault than that of others if he is not happier. Again, why is he as ill-tempered as a dog?" "Certainly, that is curious; I have never noticed it." "In time you will tell me what you think of him. In other respects, I do not dislike it. When a man is unfortunate, he must be prouder than another. Esteem him: that is the expression, exactly the sentiment which he deserves. Do not go beyond that, at least." "For what reason, Monsieur?" "Would you like me to tell you? His soul is too sensitive for him to become attached to women. You laugh? On my honour, if you do not feel that, I am sorry for you." "Perhaps it is his delicacy that makes him ill-tempered?" "No doubt of it; accustom yourself to believe it, for you will be able to account for many things in me for this reason." "Ah, Monsieur; I believe you to be sincere, trustworthy, and the soul of honour; but, as for delicacy——" "Eh! what do you call my behaviour towards you, then?" "Well, if you wish me to speak frankly to you, I think that you are far more severe and scrupulous in friendship than tender." "Severe! yes, by Jove! You have found your man." "But, you have been scolding and opposing me in my opinions for the last two days." "What the deuce! Why don't you think as I do? then I shall have nothing to reproach you with."

I burst out laughing; he could not help laughing either, owing to the frankness with

which he had spoken, perhaps in spite of himself. The visitors assembled for breakfast, and the conversation became general. Mademoiselle d'Ette again made advances to him, but they had no effect. Afterwards they bantered each other good-humouredly enough, and he set out about twelve o'clock to return to Paris to dinner. I heard yesterday, from Madame de Jully, that he had spoken very ill of Mademoiselle d'Ette at Mademoiselle Quinault's. It is true that he speaks highly of me at the same time, according to what people declare, but with a tone of patronage, which would greatly displease me, if I could believe what I hear. Perhaps it is exaggerated. To tell the truth, Madame de Jully is not at all fond of him; and although we have become more intimate since her child was born, I do not know her sufficiently well to trust blindly all that she says. In spite of all, I do not feel altogether comfortable when I think of that man. He is said to be honourable; however, he is very hasty, and if I offended his vanity, perhaps, in the first impulse, he might let slip some expressions which he would regret most deeply afterwards; but he would none the less have betrayed my confidence, and tarnished my reputation. I believe, however, that I am exaggerating these possible annoyances, and that the conversation which I had this morning with Mademoiselle d'Ette has perhaps thoroughly upset me. I told her that I was ill at ease and did not know what to do, when I lost sight of

Francueil. "Nonsense! are you still thinking about that? I fancied you were beginning to get rid of this folly." "What! what do you mean to say?" "What I said; are you still in love with each other?" "Your language is very strange, and different from that which you used to me eighteen months ago." "My language is quite simple, and not different from that which I used." "What! to call it folly?" "No, I do not mean to call folly the tenderness which you and Francueil feel and always will feel for each other; on the contrary, I meant the first frenzy, the enchanting illusion which is so sweet and which lasts for so short a time; I thought that was over, and I was congratulating you upon it from the bottom of my heart, for you will be much happier for it. See how delightful for you to be as you are! Come, my dear Emilie, you will never be really happy until you are glad to see each other again and leave each other without sorrow." "Oh! how we should be pitied, if—— But, is it so with you and the Chevalier? I confess it is a thing which surprises me, and about which I wanted to speak to you." "What?" "How do you manage to pass your time without seeing him, and without even taking advantage of the opportunities you might have had for bringing him here? I do not understand it; I could not do it myself; it would be impossible for me." "Time, reflection, and experience naturally reveal the secret; and, as for myself, I am not at all sorry for having found

it out. If our pleasures are not so lively, they will last all the longer for it. When all is said and done, it is a gain to see each other less frequently. The Chevalier has his faults; I have mine. When all this is daily combined at close quarters, indulgence disappears, impatience and sourness take its place; and then, he is no longer in his first youth. In short, I repeat, absence does no harm." "But how many delightful moments you lose for the little tranquillity you gain!" "You believe it: disabuse yourself of this error, and be sure, at least, that one gains by this calculation." "How?" "Why should you only reckon violent feelings to be happiness? That is a great mistake; if you think of it, they always cost too much, and only give sorrow in return." "Ah?" "And, what is still worse, they create a dislike for delightful impressions, which become insipid in consequence of a violent emotion. There are a thousand little agreeable trifles, belonging to every moment, which have no existence for a soul which is concentrated upon a single object." "Well, for my part, I find that it is exactly the opposite. Since I have loved Francueil, I consider everything in regard to him, and there is no longer anything in nature that is indifferent to me." "I hope, my dear friend, that in your case this error may last a long time; but, when you come to think seriously of love and all that you have experienced since you have been in love, you will find that one cherishes this passion

far more for the troubles for which it affords consolation than for the pleasures it bestows; and the best thing one can do is to reduce it in good time to——" "Do not say this to Francueil, Mademoiselle." "It is not necessary to call me 'Mademoiselle' for that; I promise you not to say anything of the kind. What a child you are! time, time will prove a greater tell-tale than I." "But leave it to act entirely by itself. I am not at all satisfied; you have grieved me." "Nonsense! we are talking sense, and you feel grieved. Come, come, write to Francueil as gaily as I am going to write to my old friend, and all your grief will vanish. Rousseau arrives to-day; we will make him talk; and *vive la joie!*"

She has gone, and left me nothing but sadness. I did not wish to confide anything to her about Duclos. The necessity of managing this man carefully worries me terribly; I am continually thinking about it.

### Continuation of the Diary.

*Two days later.*

I am really becoming more pleased with Madame de Jully every day. She is intelligent, and the turn of her mind is very agreeable; outwardly she is very cold, but she has a cheerful imagination. She talks very agreeably when she is alone, and, although she is very decided in character, it seems that society awes her. She

adores her husband, and I believe that this is one of the reasons which prevent her from devoting herself to society as much as she otherwise would, because all her energies, or rather, all her feelings, are directed towards that one object. However, she is fond of amusement, pleasure, and the theatre. I do not exactly know how all that is arranged; but yet it is the case. She is very sympathetic and friendly towards me. I am very cautious with her; for, loving her husband as she does, she would surely have a very bad opinion of me, if she could know how far I am from thinking as she does.

*La Chevrette.*

Duclos came to-day. We had a lively argument for a moment about my not writing to my husband. I really do not know if that has anything to do with him; but Francueil arrived very opportunely to get me out of difficulty. I pretended that I had something to do, so as to leave them to talk; and, when I withdrew, they went down together to take a walk.

When they returned, I found Duclos in a far better temper. "It is all settled," he said to me, "it is all right. What the deuce! you did not tell me—— One thing more or less alters the case. Remain as you are with d'Ette, but be careful. Your parents like her; she is useful to your mother. That makes a difference. I am fair, you see."

My parents received him very cordially. When

leaving, he said to me, "I am going, I shall not return for some days. If anything fresh happens to you, let me know it. I will do nothing without discussing it with Francueil. He has common sense and upright opinions. He is an honourable man, or what is called so. I am very glad to have had a conversation with him."

Francueil goes to Paris to-morrow; he intends to stay there a week, after which he is going to Chenonceaux with his father. In spite of the grief which this absence causes me—it is only for three weeks, which will seem three centuries to me—I have not the courage to complain of it. M. Gauffecourt is coming to dinner, and takes Francueil and Rousseau away with him this evening. We shall be alone this week, except for Mademoiselle d'Ette and the Chevalier, who has at last paid us a visit.

*From* MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

MY GOOD FRIEND,—I send you a messenger to inform you, from me, of what is going on here. M. de Bellegarde has been taken ill; we hope it will not have any serious result. But, as it is not forbidden to anticipate things which may happen, and since, as you know, nothing is yet decided about the future of Emilie and her children, I think that this is the right moment to come to some determination. I do not know whether you have heard of the disgraceful things of which M. d'Épinay's last letter to his father

is full. One expression especially alarms me. He declares that his wife, in her anxiety to secure her freedom, is responsible for the species of exile in which he asserts that he has been kept for more than three months. My opinion is that Emilie, at whatever cost, should behave so that none of us should be suspected, and should astonish the family by some brilliant stroke. She must, of her own accord, give up seeing you, and say so plainly.

You doubtless think that this will never take place; that the old fellow, if he gets over it, will be the first to oppose it. If, on the other hand, he does not get over it, well, when matters are once arranged, things will go on all right, and people will forget that they ever even thought of making such an arrangement, and all your happy moments will not be over. But Emilie will never have the courage to make such a declaration, unless you demand it.

Good-bye, my dear friend. Indeed, I love you both more than myself.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

Have they all agreed, my dear friend, to drive me to despair? Mademoiselle d'Ette declares that I ought to promise not to see you again, if only while my future is being settled. What! give up seeing you! And when do they intend to demand this sacrifice from me? when, unhappily, I shall perhaps have greater need of

consolation than ever. Francueil, O my dear Francueil! no; I will never consent to it.

*Note from* M. DE FRANCUEIL *to* MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE.

The idea of losing Madame d'Épinay is too much for my strength. I feel, however, how important it is for her to settle her affairs, and to avoid being suspected. I therefore agree to everything. Do not desert her, my good friend. Keep up her courage; watch over her interests and her happiness. Her happiness! it is dearer to me than life.

*From* M. DE FRANCUEIL *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—It is not only your future that is at stake, it is also that of your children. You must sacrifice all to that. Do not lose a moment; say that you have reflected, and that, since your past conduct is not approved of, you are ready to follow, in reference to me, that course which shall be dictated to you. Believe me, this sacrifice will only be momentary; first, make sure of your future, and we will afterwards arrange what is to be done. Do not hesitate an instant, my beloved friend. I wish it, I demand it, by all our past affection for each other, which will only end with our lives.

*From* MADEMOISELLE D'ETTE *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

M. de Bellegarde is as ill as he can be, my good friend. Each claims to be master here;

things are in an inconceivable state of confusion; people behave as if they feel sure he is going to die. Madame d'Esclavelles has great difficulty in restraining them. The Comte d'Houdetot, who had taken lodgings at an inn, seeing his father-in-law dying, has taken up his quarters without ceremony in the house with a footman who is more like a crafty attorney than a nobleman's footman. Madame d'Esclavelles did not venture to take upon herself either to authorise or oppose his visit, but contented herself with telling the Comtesse to prevent her husband from going into her father's room, as much in order to avoid the upset which his presence might cause him, as its probably prejudicial effect upon their interests. She appeared touched by this warning; but the Comte, on the contrary, saw in it a scheme to get him out of the way, and to prevent him from sharing any future advantages.

For all kinds of reasons, my good friend, I could wish that you were here. I believe that Emilie has decided upon the sensible course of applying to the notary, and I hope that her future will be arranged agreeably to our wishes. This promise not to see you any more means nothing, and will be broken the day after the deeds are signed. I also wanted to tell you that the Comte d'Houdetot asks a number of questions at random, all indicating future legal proceedings, if the provisions of the worthy man's will are not agreeable to him. Since, up to the present time, you are considered to be ignorant of everything, it seems

to me that, on your return, there is nothing to hinder you from coming to see us.

If Madame d'Épinay apparently consented not to see M. de Francueil again, it was only out of consideration for her children's interest that she lent herself to this pretence, and uttered this blasphemy, as she said to me herself.

She accordingly promised not to receive M. de Francueil again, at least during her husband's absence; but it was agreed that Mademoiselle d'Ette should take charge of their correspondence. Perhaps this was what the young lady was aiming at. Anyhow, M. de Francueil, having become uneasy about her intriguing spirit and interested views, decided, at all events, to keep a copy of the letters which he wrote to her. Although they are few in number, they will justify the course of conduct which we shall find her pursue.

### Continuation of the Diary.

*Ten days later.*

M. d'Épinay has just arrived. As he had been longer on this circuit than on the preceding ones, his son hardly recognised him. By way of revenge, his father declared that he looked like a badly brought up little scapegrace. He fondled his daughter, who laughingly stretched out her arms to him, as she does to everybody, and he was moved even to tears. He then asked if his son was not soon going to be sent back

to school. "Next week," I replied; "we are thinking of providing a tutor for him." "He wants one badly," said M. d'Épinay. Then, passing on to another subject, "Do you still act comedies?" "We have performed some since you went away." "Who were the actors?" "All our friends," I answered. As that did not satisfy his curiosity, he was obliged to return to the subject in a more awkward manner. I let Madame de Jully answer, and she happened to mention Francueil last. "How is he?" interrupted M. d'Épinay. "Very well." "Is it long since you saw him?" "A week," I answered. There the conversation ended. Mademoiselle d'Ette declares that I adopted an attitude which was liable to be mistaken, and that, if I always behaved so, M. d'Épinay would not venture to open his mouth in my presence. I had not noticed anything of the kind in my manner, and I believe that, if I had suspected it, I should perhaps have checked it; whence I conclude that I shall not continue it.

*Paris.*

As I was going out this morning, Madame Darty, whom I had not seen for an age, came to say good-bye to me; she is returning to the country, whence she has come, for six months. "Believe me," she said, "you have greatly benefited by the solitude in which your parents have kept you, and the formal vow you made not to see me again. You are supposed to have

a heap of lovers, my dear — Francueil, Duclos, Gauffecourt—and I have only just arrived." This made me laugh at first, but I understood that I was indebted for these remarks to my husband.

*D'Épinay, three days later.*

One of M. d'Épinay's friends has procured him a tutor for his son. He seems to me very gentle, says very little, and his answers are sensible. He is a young man named Linant; he wears a clerical dress, but he is not a priest. My parents are greatly pleased with him. As for myself, I do not know what to say about him, for, with all that, I do not see anything decided in his character. One thing even prejudices me against him a little: he prides himself greatly upon his manner of thinking and his delicacy. Is it usual to speak of such qualities when one possesses them? Suppose he were a fool? I am afraid of it. He is so courteous, so . . . In fact, I do not much like him. All things considered, he is like a girl. Unless I am much mistaken, it is this serenely foolish air which has taken my mother in; she is terribly afraid that they may be too severe with my son. M. de Bellegarde says that he is a good Latin scholar, and has gone through his classes creditably. I should trouble myself but little about that, if it were left for me to decide. I might perhaps be wrong, but there are so many other things I could wish for, which it seems to me are hardly thought of, and which I certainly consider otherwise important.

Duclos, to whom I wrote to ask him to find out about Linant, arrived yesterday evening, and only stays with us until to-morrow. He said that he had the reputation of being a very worthy man. "As for his abilities, I do not guarantee these," he added, "for the man who told me he was clever, was himself a fool."

I also, my dear guardian, have for some time been a pupil. Guess whose: M. de Gauffecourt's. He is teaching me Italian. I have already translated the three first books of *Gerusalemme Liberata*. As my tutor had praised my efforts very highly, I ventured to show them to Duclos; but he greatly humbled my vanity. "It is not bad," he said to me; "but take my advice, don't let anyone see it." "Why so?" I asked; "I should be very pleased to have the opinion of my friends." "That is no use at all," he replied, "except to give you an air of pretentiousness and weakness. You have only devoted yourself to study because Francueil is absent; when he returns, study will stop short, and translation will go to the devil." What harsh and disagreeable expressions! As for my translation, I really believe that he spoke more sincerely to me about it than M. Gauffecourt, who certainly, in order to encourage me, might have exaggerated my abilities and progress.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

I have not heard from you yesterday or to-day, my dearest friend; if to-morrow passes

without my hearing, I shall really be seriously uneasy about you or your father. A few words are so soon written, and would have done me so much good! You cannot have had time. I do not want to think of it; I only wish to live in the hope of to-morrow.

The Chevalier de Valory had a lively altercation yesterday with Mademoiselle d'Ette, I do not know what about. She pretends that it was all foolish nonsense, which she would be very sorry to remember. "Love is only desirable when it causes neither pain nor pleasure," said she to me. Ah! how different are such principles from mine! O my friend, you alone are all my pleasure, all my happiness; and should you one day . . . . but no, never, never! . . . I could not survive it.

*From* MADAME D'ÉPINAY *to* M. DE FRANCUEIL.

After a week's silence, I receive a letter from you, consisting of four lines. What, Francueil! are hunting and music your excuse for not having written to me! . . . I believed you were ill; you may imagine my uneasiness. Ah! if you knew into what a state of grief your absence plunges me! In truth, the least consolation you can offer me is to write to me regularly; it is cruel to refuse me that. Will your visit last much longer? Ah, my friend! how sorely I need you! How many things I have to say to you! It is impossible to write all, I have not the strength. Do not, however, make yourself un-

easy; you know that I have no courage for anything when you are away from me. My only resource is to talk to Mademoiselle d'Ette about you, and to think of you incessantly when I am alone. I speak to you; you answer me as my heart desires; but I am not sure; since this little note of four lines, I am afraid you do not answer so well. One must resign oneself to one's lot; mine is very hard! My beloved friend, it would be beyond my strength to endure it, if you abandoned me. Perhaps I am unjust; yes, most assuredly I am. You have not been able to write to me, since you have not done so. One word, however, only one word! You will not fail again? you will write by every post? that will be enough to calm my uneasiness. My Francueil, my blessing, my only blessing, do not oblige me to defend you against myself.

I have received a letter from Madame de Maupeou, cold, brief, and one that her tyrant must surely have dictated to her. Who would ever have believed, from her previous character, that she would have ended by becoming completely subjugated by this man? I am going to send off this letter, my dear Francueil, so as not to miss the post; I shall soon begin another. Good-bye, good-bye, a thousand times.

*From* M. DE FRANCUEIL *to* MADAME D'ÉPINAY.

It has not been in my power to write to you, my dearest friend, since I have not done so. If you knew how painful it is to me! how

impatient I should be to rejoin you, if it were permitted me ! you would not have cause to reproach me. I am terrified when I think of all the influence you have over me. I do not yet know when we shall return to Paris. Be assured, my dearest friend, that if I had only had my own heart to consult, I should not have left you, and that I should never leave you. Even if I were nearer, I might not perhaps be able to see more of you, or at least your interests might demand that I should see you somewhat less frequently than in the past : we agreed upon that. What a sacrifice ! But I shall regret no sacrifice, if it can bring you happiness, or at least tranquillity. Tell me more about yourself than about the others. What does your husband say ? What is he doing ? How does he behave towards you ? My beloved friend, tell me everything that is going on—no, tell me nothing. I could not be of any service to you ; and, if they still torment you, I must flee to the end of the world. Adieu, a thousand times, adieu.

M. de Francueil at length returned to Paris. Madame d'Épinay fancied that she noticed, the first time he called upon her, an unusual coldness in his manner. However, reflecting that this might be the result of the restraint they had imposed upon each other, and that, besides, M. de Francueil, who above everything was anxious for her happiness, had not thought it right, at this interview, during which they were afraid of

being surprised, to allow himself to say or do anything which might revive the old suspicions in regard to their intimacy, she was somewhat reassured; and they agreed to see each other elsewhere. Madame d'Épinay would have liked to meet at Mademoiselle d'Ette's; but M. de Francueil believed that, at all hazard, it was better to select another house. In this manner they spent several months, rarely seeing each other, but corresponding regularly, up to the moment when M. de Bellegarde's death brought the most melancholy diversion to all Madame d'Épinay's feelings.

Although my ward ought to have thoroughly prepared for this event, seeing that she and her mother had been the most constant companions of M. de Bellegarde during his long illness, she was struck by it as if it had been a blow she had least foreseen.

### Continuation of the Diary.

*Several days later* (*July*, 1751).

M. de Bellegarde's death was kept secret for several hours, in order to avoid the first sealing of the Court of the Exchequer. M. d'Épinay's creditors, both male and female, had already called to ask whether M. de Bellegarde was still alive, and whether it was thought that he could last much longer. Two of them left a summons.

On the following day the funeral took place. M. de Jully and the Comte d'Houdetot were the

chief mourners; and the body was conveyed to Épinay. After this, we were present at the opening of the will. While it was being read, my husband rubbed his eyes with his pocket-handkerchief, but he was not weeping; he kept shaking to make believe that he was sobbing. All M. de Bellegarde's bequests are simple and sensible. He leaves 30,000 livres to my mother. Independently of the share divided equally between all his children, he entails all M. d'Épinay's portion upon ours. Besides the income which he settled upon me at the time of my separation, he bequeaths to me 500 livres yearly, for each child born or to be born, as a substitute for the contribution which I should be obliged to make towards the expenses of their support, as enjoying a separate maintenance from my husband; he intends the said sum to be employed, as I think fit, for the keep and education of the said children.

But, as I have no wish to be suspected of interested motives, or of a desire to humiliate my husband, since Madame de Jully has told me that this clause of the will was generally considered insulting to him; and, as 1,000, even 10,000 francs would not compensate me for the contempt which such conduct would deserve, I have renounced my claim to this legacy.

The next few days were taken up by the inventory. They commenced with the ready money and capital of the deceased; afterwards, they proceeded to the distribution. Nothing can

be compared to the indecent manner in which this operation was conducted. If a kingdom had been at stake, one could not have fomented more intrigues, or shown greater distrust, than the Comte d'Houdetot.

M. d'Épinay wanted the estate; but the Comte d'Houdetot saw through his wishes, and caused it to be put up beyond its value. It was the same with the house in Paris which M. de Jully wanted to keep. Madame de Jully and myself communicated our apprehensions to the notary, who assured us that the appraiser appointed was a man of the strictest integrity; but a very high estimate was put, for instance, on a large number of rents and dues which I had always heard M. de Bellegarde say the debtors were unable to pay. I informed M. de Épinay, who knows nothing of business, and does not want anyone to interfere with his, to judge by the way in which he received my advice. "Do not worry yourself," he said; "I do nothing without consulting d'Houdetot. He understands sharp practice. Make yourself easy; we shall not be imposed upon; he has already given me some excellent advice."

Madame de Jully was as much hurt as myself by this scandal; "but," she said to me, "we must not delay the winding-up of affairs by increasing bitterness and ill-feeling. The only result of this will be to make people say, 'It is these women who have rebelled.' Patience, my sister; they will lose nothing by it; I am

contriving a way of thanking them as they deserve."

As for the Comtesse d'Houdetot, she behaves very honourably. She seems to be grieved by her husband's obvious greediness; but she treats him with a gentleness and consideration which he receives as his due, and which, for her sake, I am afraid he may abuse. He, on the other hand, either caresses her indelicately, or scolds her rudely and unsparingly; and always about trifles, such as inattention, thoughtlessness, and childishness. She is lively, sensitive, and even very affectionate; she answers him in tender madrigals, which become, in truth, epigrams for both.

At length, M. and Madame de Jully decided to be content with the ready money, so as to be sure of not being deceived, as they might be, if they took the house in Paris which they wanted; M. d'Épinay, who thought himself cleverer than the rest, because he managed to exchange the pictures which had fallen to his share for the books which he wanted for some unknown reason, ended by taking the lands and houses at a price above their value, while he was left to pay all the legacy duties, as he had the advantage over his brothers of holding an appointment which brought him in a considerable income; he also had to make up 20,000 francs, the claims upon the insolvent farmers, the real value of which might have been 35,000 livres. He agreed to everything, knowing that there was a decision already taken to force him to buy an estate

sixty leagues distant from Paris, in order to insure the entailed funds, if he took his share in ready money. His share, as the eldest, amounted to 1,700,000 livres. The others had from 1,400,000 to 1,500,000 livres.

Yesterday, I went to see my mother, for the division of our family and M. d'Épinay's irregularities have decided her to separate from us and take a house of her own. I found her so thoroughly satisfied with her abode, so happy in the solitude which I had so much dreaded for her, that I was compelled to forget the grief which our separation causes me, in my delight at her comfort. After spending two delightful hours with her, I left, feeling convinced that the condition of a sincerely religious woman is a very happy one; but, for that—all the qualities that I do not possess are necessary!

I cannot get used to Francueil's habit of getting drunk. Recently, again, at Madame de Jully's . . . . Can it be the necessity of finding some distraction for the grief of living without me? But why should he adopt a form of dissipation which inevitably leads to indifference and forgetfulness? When I attempt to find distraction, I console myself for my sorrows by the very cause of them, waiting for them to end. It is not my character; that must be admitted. As a rule, men are unable to endure contradiction long . . . . Ah! then, why do they have anything to do with love? I nearly paid very dearly for a moment of his drunkenness.

Yesterday, we supped with Madame de Jully; I had written a note to Francueil, as I hoped to find him there. I adroitly gave it to him when he offered his hand to assist me to table, and I said to him hurriedly: "Catch hold of it tightly, it is important." "Be calm," he said to me, "I thank you . . . . When shall we see each other then? How kind of you! . . ." "You are somewhat to blame, my friend," I said to him, "if I have not seen you . . . ." "I swear to you I am not," he replied. I shook my head. "What can you have to fear?" he said again; "how could one help adoring you?" We clasped hands, and he went and took a seat at some distance from me. The supper was lively; M. d'Épinay made himself very friendly to Francueil, but he encouraged him to drink, and, when he saw he was a little excited, tried to make him say things which he might use against me. I was terribly alarmed all during supper. Luckily, nothing escaped his lips; but the assurances he gave us, from time to time, that he was perfectly sober, would alone have been enough to show clearly that it was quite possible he might say something. This scene, ridiculous for him, and excessively embarrassing for me, made me sufficiently melancholy; but my feelings after supper may be imagined, when, as we were all assembled in the drawing-room—the ladies sitting down, the gentlemen standing up at some distance from us—a dispute arose; a bet was made, Francueil

pulled out his purse, and let my note fall at my husband's feet. He pretended not to notice it, and tried to kick it behind him with the end of his foot. I saw him, and wanted to go and pick it up: my strength failed me. I whispered to Madame de Jully: "Quick, quick, get hold of that note: it is to Francueil. Do not give it up to anybody, not even to him." She made a spring, took the note just when M. d'Épinay was going to put his foot upon it, and came back as if she had been playing a practical joke, making a sign to my husband to say nothing. He went up to her, and said, "I will keep the secret, but on condition that I share it." "That depends," she said; "I will enjoy it first, and, if it happens to be important, or compromises anyone, I will give it back to him, and no one shall see it; but, as far as I can judge, it is some attorney's scrawl." I was so disturbed, that it was easy for anyone to see how interested I was in this unfortunate incident. When my husband had retired, she asked me what she should do with the note. "Keep it," I said, "until we are all gone, then make M. de Francueil read it, telling him how he lost it, and burn it." "I declare to you solemnly," she said to me, "there is no trusting him to-night; he is drunk, and doesn't know what he is doing." "What am I to do, then," I said, "for I should like him to know its contents." "If I might, without indiscretion, take it upon myself?" she said, with a smile. I hesitated a moment; at last, I decided to get

her to tell him to come the next day at four o'clock, because M. d'Épinay had to go to Versailles. I took the note back and hid it in my bosom. During the rest of the evening, we had some music and singing, of which I did not hear a word; I was so disturbed at what had nearly happened to me, that I felt quite dazed; I could not sleep all night for thinking of it.

I am waiting for Francueil. My husband left at three o'clock; it is now past four. Francueil is no longer punctual.

One thing surprises me, which I cannot understand. Jelyotte, a famous opera singer, took up his quarters at Madame de Jully's last winter. He has an easy manner, to which I cannot get accustomed at all. I know that there are many good houses in which he is received, but it always seems strange to me, and when he loses twenty louis at *brelan*,[1] I cannot help feeling surprised that anyone should take them. He is really a very agreeable companion, he talks well, he has a distinguished air, and yet is no coxcomb; only he adopts a tone above his position. I am even convinced that he would succeed in making people forget it, if he were not obliged to publish it to the world three times a week.

### Continuation of the Diary.

Instead of seeing Francueil, I was interrupted yesterday by Madame de Jully, who said to me, "I have come to take you away to spend the after-

[1] A game of cards.

noon at my aunt's. The visit to Versailles has been put off to another day; my husband and yours have gone to call on the notary, who has sent for them on urgent business; and, as d'Épinay might have disturbed Francueil's visit, I have sent him a message to go to my aunt's. We will all go; then no one will be able to say anything." I embraced her with tears in my eyes, not venturing to speak plainly to her. She is fond of her husband, and perhaps, in the bottom of her heart, blames my conduct, I said to myself. The indulgence and sympathy which she showed for me, gave her at the same time an air of superiority and compassion which I did not like. "I have for a long time wished you had an attachment," she said to me, "which might compensate you for your husband's conduct. If you had taken me into your confidence sooner, you would have spared yourself a great deal of trouble. I had some suspicion that you were in love, but your behaviour with Francueil is so careful, and his life is so dissipated, that I had not quite made up my mind. Chance served us both well yesterday: you, because I shall be able to spare you embarrassment; and me, because my greatest pleasure is to be useful to you," she said, clasping me in her arms. Gratitude silenced my vanity and reflection. We went away together. On the way, I remembered that very likely Duclos might come to spend the evening with me; but, as he had not promised, I said nothing about it to Madame de Jully, being afraid that she might

propose that I should invite him to her aunt's. As it was the first time I had been there, this would not have been polite. In fact, he came, and inquired whether I should be at home to-day.

Madame de Jully asked me how I could put up with being loved "in the air"[1]—that was her expression. This question from her seemed to me curious, because no one, to use her own expression, loves so much "in the air" as her husband. The strangest thing is, that I began by defending Francueil, and endeavoured to prove that he loved me more than any man had ever loved a woman. Perhaps you imagine that vanity made me behave like this; not at all; I carefully examined my feelings. It was owing to the fear that I might be told things which I dread, that I began by establishing this feeling of security. Alas! perhaps on some other occasion I shall pay dearly for the means of informing myself of my misfortune. She told me nothing calculated to disturb me; only she advised me to go more into society than I did. She declares that it is to Francueil's taste . . . . He once was so fond of solitude! She says that he is too easy-going a man to be lost sight of, and that since, situated as I am, I cannot see him alone or often at my house, I must follow him into society. We could not continue our conversation at Madame de Jully's aunt's. Nothing can be more curious than the

[1] *En l'air:* i.e., emptily, without any reality.

tone of this society. The company is always separated in two rooms, and when people wish to talk, they leave the mistress of the house, who has always two or three old women near her spinning. Nevertheless, there are always one or two of the company left, and, as soon as anyone arrives, one of them comes without any affectation to announce it in what is called the *salon* of the young people, so that each behaves according to the interest he takes in the new arrival. All this offended me exceedingly at first; but it was easy for me to see that the gaiety and harmlessness of all these *tête-à-têtes* could only appear suspicious to those who did not see them close at hand. I became sufficiently used to this way of behaviour to talk to Francueil without constraint.

I took advantage of this moment of freedom to reproach him with his foolish behaviour of the previous evening, and to give him a severe lecture upon the unfortunate habit which he is contracting. I am very well satisfied with all he has said to me, and, had I been equally so with his conduct with Madame de Versel during the evening, I might perhaps have said that I had not spent so happy a day for a long time. She arrived about eight o'clock, followed, shortly afterwards, by M. de Jully and M. d'Épinay. A sister of Madame de Jully, who brought Madame Versel to us, informed us of our husbands' arrival. The young ladies, her companions, gathered round a work-table, and some gentlemen remained to talk with them.

Madame de Jully, Madame de Versel, M. Gauffecourt, Francueil, and myself took our seats near a window; the rest of the visitors went backwards and forwards, from one room to the other.

Several scandalous stories were told; but Madame de Jully interrupted them, saying that she was not fond of them, that one ought to leave spitefulness to devotees and old women, and that, when one was at an age to suffer retaliation, it was advisable to spare one's neighbour. "As for myself," she said, "I declare that I believe nothing." "Not even the good," rejoined Gauffecourt. "No; you are right; not the bad, because it is repugnant to me to believe it; not the good, because it is too difficult to practise in this world." "What!" said Madame de Versel, with her air of simplicity and astonishment, "then you believe in nothing but God?" "Not even in God, if you want me to tell you." "Hush, my sister," I cried; "suppose your husband were to hear you." "What does that matter? One must never tell one's lover that one does not believe in God; as for one's husband, it doesn't matter." "Why this distinction?" "Because, with a lover, one never knows what may happen, and one must reserve a back-way of getting out of the difficulty. Devoutness and scruples cut everything short; there is no need to fear any consequences, or any scandal or outburst, with such reasons for change." "But," said Madame de Versel, "one has simply

to tell one's lover that one loves him no longer, when one does not."

Here the arrival of the husbands put a stop to this foolish conversation. At supper, Madame de Versel's ingenuousness proved only too successful with Francueil. I thought that I also noticed that she did not seem sorry to please him. After supper, we went to the Palais-Royal. Francueil gave his arm to Madame de Versel and myself. He hardly made any distinction between us, and I had reason to fear that, if anything, he looked at her more than myself. We returned at one o'clock. I spent part of the night in asking myself whether I had reason or not to be satisfied.

M. and Madame d'Houdetot told us, on Monday, when at supper with me, that they had purchased a new estate. They had the plans of it: if they are accurate, it must be a fine place, but difficult of access, it being only possible to reach it by water. The Comtesse is as enthusiastic about it as she is about everything: she is dying to be there, and the Comte condescended to assure her kindly that he would procure her that satisfaction before a fortnight was over. They have made us promise to go and see them there. M. d'Épinay did so willingly; but I hope that he will not oblige me to go with him. How can I lose sight of all that is dear to me for a whole month—my mother, my children, Francueil? It seems to me an age since I saw them all.

I am very anxious to see M. d'Épinay's affairs finally arranged, that I may go and settle in

the country with my mother and the children. I shall try to interest Francueil to some extent in their education, in order to get him to settle near us. I shall intrust him with my son's first music and drawing lessons: this will amuse him, and relieve the child of the repulsiveness of the first start. The plan is pleasant and attractive: it flatters my imagination in a delightful manner: but, will it be carried out? It will certainly be a month before it can be put into execution.

Mademoiselle d'Ette came to see me to-day. She was in a delightful humour. She certainly intends, she told me, to come to Épinay during the Chevalier's absence. I did not give a very decided answer on that point, because I do not particularly care to have her as a fixture. Who knows whether she may not be my husband's spy? Her conduct is so odd. I have so many grounds for suspecting her. This idea worries me. I prefer not to see her, and to be relieved from thinking of it any more.

I am so disgusted with Duclos' conduct, his tone and his manners, that, if I were not afraid that he might abuse the confidence I have placed in him, I should like never to hear of him again in my life. This consideration keeps me back, and makes me endure things of which, in the bottom of my heart, I am ashamed, and which however I could not put up with, if they should last.

Just lately, he came to my house at four o'clock: I had gone out: and, as I expected him, I had left a message that I should soon

return. He was shown upstairs, with M. Gauffecourt and M. de Jully. When I returned, he scarcely looked at me. I expressed some regret at not having been at home on the preceding day. He did not answer me, and remained for a considerable time without taking any part in the conversation. He got up, sat down again, looked at his watch, and seemed to be telling the other visitors to go. This disturbed me and made me exceedingly uncomfortable. At last, this behaviour struck me as so ridiculous, that I could no longer stand it: "What is the matter, Monsieur?" I said to him; "do you want anything?" He looked at me with an air of astonishment, and, after gazing silently, replied with a cold and affected smile, "No, Madame, nothing is the matter with me." I continued to talk without appearing to take any notice of him. This made him more restless, and he continued to behave in an even more unreasonable manner, until at last, not knowing how, without causing a scene, I could show him how ridiculous I considered it, I said to him, laughing: "Really, Duclos, I believe your blood must be full of fleas: you cannot keep still." "If it displeases you," he replied rudely, "you have only to say so." "Good heavens, Monsieur! walk about as much as you like, provided only you assure me that you have not got the fever: for I was beginning to be alarmed about you." In a serious and respectful tone, he replied: "I thank you, Madame, for the lively interest which you take

in me." M. d'Épinay sent a message that he would not return to supper, and everybody left the room. As Gauffecourt retired, he whispered to me: "Treat that rascal there as he deserves: you cannot believe the harm he is doing you." "Leave it to me," I answered.

I remained alone with Duclos. "Your conduct this evening, Monsieur," I said to him, "is that of a ridiculous person, and has so disgusted me . . . What is the matter with you, if you please?" "By heavens, Madame! do you take me for a fool to be played with? If you think that I am your lackey, I will let you see that I am not." "Monsieur, think of what you are saying, I beg you." "I was on the point of laughing at all that . . . then I said, 'however, I must see: I must deal carefully with her.'" "Deal carefully with me! Indeed, I am much obliged to you, but I will relieve you of the necessity: all that I expect from you is marks of esteem and regard, else . . ." "But, good heavens! when I saw your easy manner and heard your jests. Ah, by heavens! you will not find that succeed with me." "Come, come: are you mad? I have allowed you to speak: but, really, I am utterly amazed. What is the meaning of this ridiculous attack upon me, whereas it is really I who have to complain of you? And what a tone to take! How indecent and affected your behaviour has been this evening! I warn you that I cannot, with any self-respect, endure it any longer, and that I will not endure it." "You do

not see that it is your harsh manner — I beg your pardon: but I always speak out—it was the remark which it pleased you to make upon it that made my behaviour seem ridiculous." "No, Monsieur: it is the indulgence I have shown towards your whims, and which I will show no longer, which constitutes my offence and seems to justify you in adopting this tone and showing ill-temper: and what foundation is there for all this, may I ask?" "What foundation? Where were you then, I ask, yesterday evening?" "Where was I? And what does that matter to you, I beg, that you can ask me such a question?" "Ah! I have nothing to say. I thought that I was your friend: apparently I was mistaken. But if I am only your acquaintance, your conduct is still more unpardonable. You tell me that you are at home every evening, that I have only to come when I like. I make my arrangements, I come, I find nobody. What the deuce! I go to Madame de Jully's; you are not there. I inquire where you are, I question all the servants, nobody knows anything about it." "I did not anticipate going out: I was invited to Madame de Jully's aunt's house: I could not refuse, and, besides, I did not expect you. I expressed my regret to you, however, when I came in." "But, at least, you ought to have written me a line this morning: but no, not a word." "Monsieur, I do not understand anything about these trifles. Whether I went out or not, I am not responsible to anyone. However, I should have sent a mes-

sage to you this morning, if you had not anticipated me by informing me that you would come to-day. But, since you are so unreasonable, I will never in my life let you have another message. Make your arrangements without ever reckoning upon me: that is simpler. When I am at home, you will find me, and I will make you welcome, on condition, however, that you behave yourself properly." "Good heavens! do you think you are going to teach me how to behave?" "No: I claim to teach you nothing but what is agreeable to me, and what you have not yet guessed."

He began to laugh: "Zounds! that is what one calls having an answer ready: I like that. I believed—I am going to tell you quite frankly—I believed that you had some silly party, at which you did not want me to be present." "You must have a very poor idea of my grief at my father-in-law's death, if you think that I can so soon devote myself to pleasure parties." "Come," said he, taking my hand, "let us think no more about it. Promise me to be more punctual with me."

I drew back my hand and said: "Ah! excuse me: you must think of it again, and promise me to change your tone, for, in truth, it is intolerable." "What does it matter to you? You know that, in reality, I love you as a child: you need take no notice of anything else." "That is impossible, Monsieur. This tone offends me, both for my own sake and for that of others." "The deuce! you will see that I am

not understood. Zounds! if I thought that anyone could doubt my principles! People know that you need my assistance in your affairs, and that, had it not been for me, you would have lost your head twenty times over! And your husband! I swear to you that they would like just as much to see me at a distance. Come, come, let us say no more about it. I am not fond of recalling the services I am able to render. Ask the Abbé de Bernis. I have rendered him a hundred in the course of his life: but may I be hanged if I have ever said anything to him about them. But they are like that: they believe, because a person does not boast. H'm! I will tell them once: I will have a clear understanding about the matter. Come, let us have a mouthful to eat: I want to go away early."

We had supper. While I was more or less silent he chattered continually. "Well," said he, "may I reckon upon finding you here in the evenings, or not?" "I believe that I shall be at home often; but I commit myself to nothing. When I am at home you will be welcome: that is all I can say to you." "But, what the deuce! that doesn't suit me. Look here: I am going to confide a secret to you; but mind you don't go and talk about it." "I am not fond of secrets: not that I have any trouble in keeping them, but, if I can do nothing in the matter, it is at least useless!" "By Jove, yes, you can! without that . . . do you understand me, then?" "In this case,

speak, Monsieur: you may rely upon my discretion." "Mademoiselle Quinault is meditating a retreat: her means will not allow her to remain in Paris. It is a loss for her friends, and particularly for me. I shall have to make different arrangements: it is the very deuce! everybody does not suit me: I must be comfortable before I can settle anywhere. If you had been willing to arrange to give up all your day to your society friends, and to come back early every evening, you would have been sure of never being alone: I would come and keep you company, and that would suit us all: at least, it would be very proper, considering your health and your position. Your husband would be sure of finding a good supper and cheerful company. Think it over. Besides, Francueil would have his evenings free to run about as he pleased."

I tried to amuse myself to the last with the unheard-of tyranny of the man. I said to myself: If only it were Francueil who made this proposal to me! "That is very tempting," I said; "it is only the impracticability of the plan which I do not like." "How so?" "It would not suit either my husband, or my friends, or M. de Francueil, or, consequently, myself. Except for that, it is delightful. In eight or ten years we will see." "Ah! if it suited Francueil, the rest would follow of itself: that's just where I catch you. I swear to you that it will suit him better than you think." "I do not believe anything of the kind." "What!

good heavens! do you take me for a blockhead? What the deuce! I can see as well, perhaps better, than anybody else. Because you have told me nothing, you think that I have seen nothing. You are not happy, my poor woman, and it is your fault. Zounds! why should you tie yourself to a giddy pate's side? You have been duped: D'Ette is a hussy: I have always told you so: you would never believe me: I am sure that you knew what to believe: I am certain of it. It is no good for you to shake your head, and pretend to laugh; there is only one thing for you to do. Let Francueil go, remain friends, nothing more: but remain friends, because you must not quarrel: and have no more lovers: I mean, no more advertised lovers. Then there is a sure means of avenging yourself honourably upon Mademoiselle d'Ette, and making her serve your interests, without her ever being able to harm you. That, I fancy, is worth the trouble of thinking about." "What! that is sublime! And what is the means?" "What is it? She must become your husband's mistress: and we must have the proofs of it. I already have evidence of her treachery towards you." "You have?" "Undoubtedly: don't you think that you have proofs as well?" "No: I assure you that I do not even believe it." "That is all the same, so much the worse or better for you: but, as I was saying, you will then confound her when you are alone with her, or rather, in my presence; and we will threaten to make

the proofs public, unless she leads your husband to act as shall be agreeable to us. You have only to leave me to see to this affair; I promise you to carry it out successfully." "I am much obliged to you for your zeal, Monsieur: but it so complicates matters that it frightens more than it consoles me. Believe me, it will be better for each of us to remain as we are: that is the best thing that can happen to us: as for me, that is what I am firmly resolved to do." "On my honour, so much the worse for you. However, I must tell you again that it is more than time to get rid of Francueil as a lover, if you wish to obtain the respect which you need for your family and yourself." "And who has told you that this is not our position?" "In that case, why reject the arrangement which I propose to you?" "Because there are a thousand other reasons which render it unsuitable for me."

I confess that, for a moment, I was disturbed by the idea of the proofs which he declared he had against Francueil and Mademoiselle d'Ette. But, on reflection, I am convinced that he has none. If he had had any, he would not have failed to produce them. He only wanted to make me talk; and, by advising me to have no advertised lover, he loses in my opinion the merit of this advice, which I believe to be selfish. Perhaps he imagines that he might take the place of Francueil, if I were simple enough to listen to him. I dismissed him early and even somewhat eagerly.

I dined to-day at my mother's house with Francueil. I told him all that Duclos had said to me, in order that he might be more careful in his company: he makes too many friendly advances to him for a man whose dangerous character we have recognised: he agreed.

My husband, my son, and Linant were at this dinner. I am not so well satisfied as I should have expected with the manner in which this man sets to work with his pupil: he has no settled order or system: thus the child knows nothing: when anyone asks him a question, he seems bewildered, and cannot even say what branch of study he is set to work at, or rather, what is the subject of his lessons. He passes continually from one subject to another, disconnectedly and probably without any plan. I want to remedy this as quickly as possible; but I must consult Gauffecourt, and even Duclos: Rousseau is absent, otherwise I should leave it to him alone.

## CHAPTER VII (1751–1752).

### Continuation of the Diary.

*Eight days later.*

M. d'Épinay has completed his household. He has three footmen, I have two: I would not have more. He has a valet-de-chambre: he also wanted me to have a second maid, but as I have no necessity for one, I would not give in. In short, the household, including the women and the valets, is sixteen in number. Although the life that I lead is rather monotonous, I hope that I shall not be obliged to make any change in it. M. d'Épinay's is different. When he gets up, his valet-de-chambre proceeds to dress him. Two lackeys stand by, waiting orders. The chief secretary comes with the intention of giving him an account of the letters he has received from his department, which it is his duty to open: he has to read the answers and get them signed; but he is interrupted in this occupation over and over again by every imaginable kind of creature. First comes a horse dealer, who has some unrivalled horses to sell, but which are bespoken by a great lord: he has however come so as to avoid breaking his word. He gives a tempting description of them: M. d'Épinay asks the

price. "Lord So-and-so offers sixty louis." "I will give you a hundred." "It is no good, unless he goes back from his word." However, the bargain is concluded for a hundred louis, without the horses ever having been seen; for, on the following morning, the lord does not fail to go back from his word: this is what I saw and heard last week.

Next comes a rascal who wants to bawl an air, and to whom he gives his patronage to secure him admission to the Opera, after having given him a few lessons in good taste and taught him the peculiarities of French singing: then it is a girl, who is made to wait to find out if I am still there. I get up and go: the two lackeys open the folding-doors to let me go out—me, who could pass through the eye of a needle; and the two armed attendants in the antechamber cry: "Madame, Messieurs: here is Madame." All arrange themselves in a row. These gentlemen are dealers in stuffs and instruments, jewellers, book-hawkers, footmen, shoeblacks, creditors; in fact, the most ridiculous and distressing lot of people you can imagine. It is twelve or one o'clock before my husband's toilet is finished, and the secretary, who, without doubt, knows by experience the impossibility of giving a detailed account of affairs, has a little memorandum-book which he puts into his master's hand to tell him what he is to say at the meeting. Another time, he goes out on foot or in a coach, returns at two o'clock, in frightfully

disordered attire, dines *tête-à-tête* with me, or with his chief secretary to make a third, who talks to him about the necessity of settling each item of expenditure, of giving commissions for such and such a purpose. The only answer is: "We will see to that." After this, he goes the round of society and the theatres; and he sups out when he has no one to supper at home.

I see that my days of repose are over; and that, if he has not hitherto kept open house, it is because his plate was not ready, and his house not furnished to his taste. The plate is very nice, neither too gorgeous nor mean. The day after it was brought, he gave a grand supper, which he ordered himself, for fear that I should not show sufficient taste. He came into my apartments the day before to inform me of his intention and to show me the list of the people whom he had invited: they were twelve in number, and, with the exception of M. and Madame de Jully, the little Comtesse de C——, and Jelyotte, there was no one whom I knew. When I made the remark to him, he said: "Invite anyone you please yourself." I limited myself to inviting Gauffecourt. The supper was very tame: the only subjects of conversation were theatres, horses, and girls. At dessert, Jelyotte sang, and afterwards we played cards. At twelve o'clock, the ladies retired; I did the same; and on the following day I heard that M. d'Épinay and two others had remained playing *brelan* and *trente et quarante* until two o'clock.

*Five days later.*

My son was to have come to dinner at my mother's to-day. He did not come. A note from Linant gravely announced that an exercise written "with a bill-hook," such was his expression, had obliged him to keep the child in as a punishment. This day of rejoicing has thereby been changed into a day of sadness, and there is no doubt that I was almost as much affected by it as my mother. She had approved of my asking Duclos to dinner with her: I wanted to set him on to Linant, to know what I ought to think about the plan of education with which he amuses me whenever I raise any objection. This disarrangement of my plans entirely upset me, because I was afraid of being obliged to go and settle down at Épinay before I had decided anything in the matter.

We dined with Duclos, Gauffecourt, and Francueil. The latter was very serious and disgustingly absent-minded. It is true that hardly anything was talked about except my son, my hopes, my anxieties: but if that might have been wearisome to anyone else, ought it to have been so to him? After dinner, I asked him what was the matter with him: he assured me so positively that nothing was the matter with him and that he was just as usual, that I thought I was mistaken, and on considering the matter more carefully to-day, I cannot doubt that it was the presence of Duclos which made him uncomfortable.

After dinner, Duclos proposed to me to go to the school with him: I gladly accepted. I tried to persuade the other two gentlemen to accompany us, but, as I had suspected, they had business which would not allow them: we accordingly set out without them, after promising my mother to return to her house. On the way, I told Duclos what I wanted him particularly to insist upon with Linant. "I know, I know," said he, interrupting me, "I only need a word: but do you know who the deuce it is that Francueil is angry with?" "I do not know: it seems to me, however, that he was much the same as usual." "Yes: much the same as he has been for some time, but I don't like it. Why, when I speak to him, he hardly condescends to answer me. What does that mean? there is something behind that." "I do not think so: I have not noticed it. . . ." "Anyhow, it is a matter of indifference to me; but it would not be so, if you had told him of our conversations. This is what troubles me. How the deuce do I know the idea you may have given him of my principles, to judge by his manner? Everything depends upon the way of speaking and the people to whom one speaks. I know that you know me, and that you know how to listen; but that would be neither philosophy nor sound sense. Had you told our conversations to a man with a head and brains, it wouldn't have mattered, but a giddy-pate who . . . What, zounds! I give you advice as if you were my child, and you are playing at ruining

me. . . ." "Who has told you that? you have an extraordinary head." "But you make no answer." "You have not given me the time. No, Monsieur, no: I am not in the habit of repeating things which I have no intention of deciding upon, and I told you plainly that I did not mean to follow the advice you gave me: so you may make your mind easy."

I abruptly broke off the conversation upon this subject, which was embarrassing to me. I returned to the subject of my son, and in this manner we reached the college. We found the child seated at a table, with a blank book in front of him, on which he was making crosses and blots, being quite unable to think of anything of the exercise he had to write. M. Linant was in a dressing-gown, bareheaded, lying back in an easy chair, with his legs stretched out upon another, and reading. This attitude did not greatly please me. I entered with an air of sorrow rather than severity. I desired by that to inspire my son with the fear of causing me pain another time, rather than with the fear of punishment: he came towards me to kiss me: I drew back. "I cannot kiss you," I said. "If M. Linant thought you were not fit to come into our presence, still less, my friend, are you fit to kiss me." The child was ashamed, and remained by my side in a state of confusion. Duclos said immediately: "Well, well! let us see what it is all about. An exercise badly done? He is going to do it all right, I am sure." My son ran to

look for it, saying to him: "Ah, Monsieur! it is very difficult: you shall see." "If it were only that," said M. Linant, who had just put on his wig again, "it would, no doubt, be very reprehensible: but this is the third day that my young gentleman has begun it again, because he has taken it into his head not to do it: and these are not the only causes of complaint which we have against him." "Let us hear the others, then," said Duclos. "Monsieur, what would you say of a child who talks to his lackey in a way in which I would not talk to a shoeblack?" "Don't let him have one at all, then: let him wait upon himself; he will soon find that he cannot do without him: this will teach him how to behave towards those whose services he needs." "Yes, yes, that is true, Monsieur: I have thought of it: but that is not all. Of the fifteen Latin verses which he had to learn in class yesterday, he did not know ten, and when my young gentleman is scolded, he shows his temper." "The deuce!" said Duclos. "Come, come, I will give him an exercise which will do as well as any other: he shall go into this room while we talk, and, before we go, it will be finished, and perfectly done."

He wrote eight or ten lines, which the child could understand, about the employment of time, the loss of which cannot be made up, like the loss of fortune, character, etc. He was put into the study, and we three remained together. "Monsieur," said Duclos to Linant, "that

exercise was too difficult: on my honour, it is as much as I could do, I who have had no other profession for seven years, without being more advanced in it." You may guess that Linant defended his exercise and Latin as much as he could. "What the deuce!" said Duclos to him: "that is just the point to be considered in bringing a boy up. One would think that all boys were being educated to become monks. Let us see, Monsieur, if you please: come, M. and Madame d'Épinay have some confidence in my abilities; let us come to the point. Tell me, I beg you, your system, the arrangement of your day. First, how is the morning employed?" "We get up at six o'clock, Monsieur: after which, we have prayers." "Are they short?" "A quarter of an hour, Monsieur." "That is too long."

"M. Linant," I said to him, "in regard to that, do as you please." "But, Madame," rejoined Duclos, "are you not claiming to know more about it than Jesus Christ? *Orantes nolite multum loqui.* It was He who said that. He is no fonder of chattering than men are: I am grateful to Him for that."

"The benefit I find in this quarter of an hour," I said to them, "is that it is always time spent in reflection." "Nonsense!" said Duclos, "you imagine that he thinks of what he is saying. But, before we go any further, Monsieur, who are you?" "Who am I? What do you mean, Monsieur?" "Yes; your father,

your mother, their position? Where do you come from? What have you done?" "Monsieur, I do not see what that has to do with——" "The deuce! you don't see? To know if you are capable of bringing anyone up, it is necessary to know if you have been brought up yourself." "Well, Monsieur, I was brought up at the College of Jesuits." "I should have preferred it to have been somewhere else." "I was very strong in Greek composition." "I reverence you for it. Do you know French, Monsieur?" "Monsieur, I flatter myself that I do, and I believe that I have every right to think so." "Good! so much for that." "I am the son of one of the agents of M. le Duc ——." "I know him: his household has always been well regulated. I gather from that that your father is not rich, and I congratulate you upon it." "Your conclusion is just, Monsieur, and I accept your congratulations. It was owing to his poor circumstances that he made me adopt the clerical dress; but, as I have no inclination for the ecclesiastical state, I have felt scruples about assuming anything of it, except the dress: however, I have submitted to the tonsure, and I hold a benefice of 500 livres, attached to a title of canon, which M. le Duc has procured for me." "I see that your conscience is well regulated." "I am fond of literature, and for this reason I have preferred to gain my livelihood in a position not opposed to my tastes and the poor abilities which Providence has

bestowed upon me." "Has Providence by chance made you write verses?" "Monsieur, I can write tolerable verses on occasion: but it is a natural talent to which I have never devoted much time." "Ah! I understand well enough: Nature said to you, 'Be a poet,' and immediately you became one. That is just like her. Monsieur, you must see that it is not exactly this that we want. Do not give your pupil a taste for scribbling poetry: be very careful of that: it means the ruin of good taste and all vigorous ideas. But, to return to the employment of your time. After prayers, you dress and have breakfast: no doubt about that, I suppose?" "Yes, Monsieur," said Linant. "Then he goes to class for two hours. . . ." "Very good: the ordinary routine!" rejoined Duclos: "that's settled. As soon as you attend the classes, I know all about it." "No doubt, Monsieur," replied Linant; "and what can one do better?" "Exactly the opposite of what you do, Monsieur, for all this is not worth a rap: and, here now —what do you read?" "We go through the *Selectae* together." "Latin again!" "Then we have some of the geography in verse by Father Buffier." "Oh! for shame!" I said to him. "Madame, that concentrates the ideas, and fixes the chief points in the memory." "Monsieur," said Duclos, "we must never learn what common sense urges us to forget. And what about your reading, Monsieur?" "A little of the *Imitatio Christi*, and once a week the *Henriade* of Voltaire."

"I confess, Monsieur," I said to him, "that this plan does not please me at all. I see no object in all that." "You are right," said Duclos. "Monsieur, teach him a little, very little Latin: above all, no Greek: let me not hear it spoken of. I do not want to make him either a fool or a learned man. There is a middle course in all that which must be followed." "But, Monsieur," said Linant, "he must know his authors, and a slight smattering of Greek. . . ." "What the deuce are you talking about? What good will your Greek do him? There are about fifty old twaddlers whose only merit is that they are old, and who have ruined the brightest intellects. If he could learn them without being intoxicated with them, he would only be a learned fool, and if he grew enthusiastic about them, he would make himself ridiculous. Nothing of that! Monsieur, teach him plenty of manners, plenty of morality."

"Monsieur," I said to Linant, "teach him to love his fellows, to be useful to them and to make himself loved by them: that is the learning of which everybody has need, and which no one can dispense with." "Ah! no doubt, no doubt, Madame," he replied; "but as instruction and a little knowledge are necessary, he must submit to the exercises of the public classes: they will not make them on purpose for him." "Well, Monsieur," I said to him, "he shall not go: teach him in his room." "In that case, Madame, he would be infinitely better at home with you."

"That is another affair, Monsieur, which I will consider."

Duclos then entered upon some details as to the manner in which his day should be employed. "Let him learn," he said, "how to read and write well: keep him seriously at the study of his own language: there is nothing more absurd than spending one's life in the study of foreign languages and neglecting one's own. We don't want to make him an Englishman, a Roman, an Egyptian, a Greek, or a Spartan. He was born a Frenchman; a Frenchman he must be made, that is to say, a man good at almost everything. Oh! when you have brought him to this point, it will be Madame's business to see what she intends to make of him. A little history, a little geography, but only on the map, while talking: he is too young to make a serious study of it: let him know how to reckon well, Monsieur: everything is a matter of reckoning and calculation. After a while, we will let him go on to geometry: that is a necessary science, because everything can be measured: it is the best logical training, and keeps the mind straight: a very important thing, for nothing can set it right again when it is crooked."

"That is all very just," replied Linant: "but there is more for me to do than for the child." "Oh, no doubt," rejoined Duclos. "Are you lazy? In that case, give up your profession: you will never do any good in it, I warn you." "No, Monsieur, I am not lazy: it will be no

trouble to me to give Madame proofs of my zeal and devotion. I am fond of the lad: he is gentle, he has a good disposition: but I mistrust his abilities: it is no case for an ordinary education. One must, so to speak, remodel and recast a character . . ." "Who the deuce is talking to you about that?" interrupted Duclos. "Beware of that: one must not attempt to change a child's character: not to mention that the attempt is never successful, the greatest success that one can promise oneself, is to make a hypocrite of him. No, Monsieur, no: you must make the most of the character which Nature has given him: that is all that is expected of you. But, come, let us see what his defects are. Is he a liar?" "He never lies, except to excuse himself." "In that case, Monsieur, it is your fault. It is your business to spare him the opportunity. If he is naturally truthful, the fault will come to nothing. But pay attention to it: for if, on the contrary, you multiply the opportunities, you will make of it an acquired vice and a habit of which he will perhaps never break himself."

This reflection appeared to me very just, and I dwelt strongly upon the necessity of avoiding everything which might lead him to disguise the truth. We had a little trouble to make ourselves understood by Linant, who could not conceive that it was better to ignore a fault and leave it unpunished, than to put the child in the position of having to defend it or deny it by a lie. Duclos apostrophised him again in a manner which made

me laugh inwardly. "Is the child idle?" he asked him. "Very," answered poor Linant. "Then, Monsieur, I advise you never to let him see you as you were when we came in. Eh! does that surprise you? You have got all the work to do here. But, tell me now, what effect do you imagine will be produced upon him by phrases as well spoken and well turned as it pleases you to imagine, and such as I easily believe you can find, when he afterwards sees that your actions contradict them? What will he think of a preacher of activity, wrapped in a dressing-gown, wearing a nightcap, and lying upon two chairs, in the middle of the day? You see, my dear Monsieur, that, in your profession, nothing is a matter of indifference, and that one must be more consistent with children than with men who are never so themselves." "You are right, Monsieur: I feel that, and I will not expose myself to so just a reprimand again."

If I had been disgusted with his attitude on our arrival, I was so well satisfied with the manner in which he at once excused himself, that I began to feel more respect for him. I told him so, at the same time confessing the first impression that I had formed. It is certain that such an avowal, under such circumstances, is an indication of more than one good quality, and is greatly in favour of a man. He also told us that my son was very stubborn and rather harsh with his valet. I advised him not to pass over any fault of the kind, and to be unceasing in his

efforts to bring him back to the principles of justice and equity. "Another thing that is very important, Monsieur," I said to him, "is never to allow him to require any degrading service from his valet. Never permit this on any account."

After this, we discussed all sorts of subjects. I cannot exactly tell you all the excellent things that Duclos said; but, carried away by the heat of the conversation, he made some remarks which were so satirical upon himself that, while I admired his intrepidity, I remained dumb. He has a way of speaking which readily imprints itself on the memory, but, as Linant is not of so attractive a stamp, I do not know exactly what he said in reply: he is slow in understanding. He is a man of limited capacity, whom I believe to be honest, but whose zeal is greater than his ability. I do not know whether he is not somewhat selfish: he is fair-spoken, without being a flatterer. However, Duclos said to him suddenly: "Do not commit the folly of abusing passions and pleasure to him: I would as soon he were dead, as condemned to have none." Linant, however, stood out for combating them openly by force, as soon as they began to show themselves. "I know quite as well as you," said Duclos, "that it would be desirable that he should have only moderate passions: but I prefer that he should have strong ones, such as will carry him through the world like a runaway horse, rather than that he should be

like a stone. What the deuce! if he receives a dig with the elbow, he must know how to give one back: as for myself, I allow none at all, and that is a very essential point. Inspire him with a taste for honourable enjoyments." Linant sensibly objected that this expression was very vague and might be misunderstood. I told him that the explanation which I would give to it, and of which I approved, was more precise. "By the word honourable," I said, "I understand the influence of the soul upon all sensible objects." This led to many reflections, explanations, and exceptions. At every word, Linant raised an objection: whence I concluded that it is impossible to make a man of limited capacities understand the language of feeling and intelligence.

"In the matter of integrity," said Duclos, "I would certainly keep him well in hand. Besides, intercourse with the world will lessen it. Monsieur, let his head be free from prejudices: sweep them all away. Error is never good for anything: not to mention that errors never come singly."

On this point I reserved to myself the right to fix the limits. He advised him never to give him any order without telling him the reason for it, because we ought not to lead children like dumb animals, but ought to accustom them to attach importance to and to take interest in everything they do, especially their duties. "People talk of sentiments," he added: "there

is only one that can be followed without danger —that which is acquired by actual experience, by conversation, or by reading. If you teach him well, he will have no dislikes except such as he ought to have, and he will always know how to give an account of his tastes: our knowledge is only acquired by way of the senses. Make him use his eyes and his ears: make him judge of all the actions which come under his observation: in this manner, you will know whether he approves of a folly in himself, or if he knows how to appreciate a good thing. Monsieur, above all let him know that there are honest people everywhere, but that there is a far greater number of rascals, and that it is very important to be able to distinguish the latter; for they do more harm in one moment than the rest can ever do good."

This was one of the reflections which began to make me consider: but the following utterly astounded me. Linant was telling us that he had the greatest trouble in the world to make his pupil behave politely. "Politeness, politeness!" said Duclos; "I would rather he had the courage to be true, at the risk of being considered brutal like myself. In a country like this, politeness is small change, of which everybody has his pockets full, and which makes nobody any the richer." "But, Monsieur," said Linant innocently, "if people always said to each other what they thought, there are numbers who would not be able to endure one another." "Then,

one need only hold one's tongue, and so much the worse for those whose vanity is wounded by silence." I do not understand this man at all: for this is exactly the way in which I treat him, and he has four times more intelligence and shrewdness than he needs to be sure of it.

He relieved me of my astonishment by an apt comparison, which, however, I do not believe is original: it seems to me I have read it somewhere. He asked M. Linant if my son was fond of money. He replied that he did not yet seem to know the value of it. "You must teach him," said Duclos, "and tell him that gold is only esteemed according to the use that is made of it. In itself, it is a thing which is neither good nor bad: but it is like a sword in the hands of a fool or a wise man. Besides, a man who knows how to keep his fathers' fortune is always rich enough."

The child interrupted our conversation once or twice to show us his work: at last we called him. His exercise was without any serious fault, but the construction was comic, so that, if it had been translated literally, the result would have been a rigmarole far beyond the intention and intelligence of the author. Linant had great difficulty in abandoning his gravity on this occasion. After a friendly lecture to the child, we returned to my mother's; and, on the way, we agreed that there was nothing to be got out of Linant, as long as the child remained at school; and Duclos undertook to induce M.

d'Épinay to take him away at once and never send him back. "By the way," he said to me, "you intend, then, to leave him some prejudices: that is your business: but do not forget to tell him that all that he is bidden to do, even in the name of God, if it is good and useful to society, is really from God; but, although it were written in the most sacred books in the world, if it is good neither for him, nor for others, it is not from God."

We arrived at my mother's house, where we very fortunately found M. d'Épinay. Duclos gave him an account of all that he had just seen and heard. We were all strongly in favour of removing the child from school, and, after a lengthy chat, Duclos gained the day, and M. d'Epinay promised that I should take my son away to the country, and that he should not leave me again. This decision brought with it another that was very satisfactory for me: my mother agreed to come and spend the fine season of the year there. In ten or twelve days we shall go there for a week, to set up our establishment and make some little arrangements that are necessary: after which, my mother will bring my son there.

### Continuation of the Diary.

I have been at Épinay for two days. I was greatly astonished, on my arrival, to find there all the useless, and yet agreeable things, that the most choice, I venture to say the most indecent

luxury could imagine. Gauffecourt, who is with me, is greatly disgusted at it: we are trying to think how we can bring M. d'Épinay to a sense of the extent of his extravagances: I foresee the most fatal results from it, the least of which must inevitably be his ruin.

Duclos came to dinner to-day: he found me sad, and asked me the reason. "All this luxury and show displeases me," I said to him, "and announces so disastrous a future, that I cannot make up my mind to enjoy it." "What do you call enjoying it?" he asked me abruptly. "You would be mad enough to be put into a lunatic asylum if you could be happy with all these fallals! You ought to do your utmost to put a stop to it, otherwise your house, in a very short time, will be filled with nothing but insipid creatures, who will drive good company away from it, and, into the bargain, will only come here to laugh at you."

*Tuesday.*

My mother, my son, and Linant have been here since Saturday. On the following day Francueil came to dinner. I was fairly well pleased with him, but there is something incomplete about it all: there is something to be said, I do not exactly know what—I have been unable to talk to him alone. M. d'Épinay asked him to come and stay a week, as well as M. and Madame de Jully, who were also present: they are coming to-morrow. We shall have Jelyotte as well. We propose to have music every

evening, and to hunt every morning. I do not quite know what I shall do with all these people.

Madame de Jully asked me how my heart was. "I know nothing about it," I answered. "Poor fool!" she said to me with an air which, I confess, disturbed me. However, she has given me no unpleasant explanation of this expression: perhaps she wants to spare me.

CONTINUATION OF THE DIARY.

Francueil is near me: he is gay, and seems happy, except for a few moments of thoughtfulness. He seems to regret nothing: he sacrifices his hunting, of which he is so fond, for me: he spends in my company the time which the gentlemen devote to this amusement. In spite of that, I am not happy: I am angry with myself when I cast my eyes over the past: I find so great a difference in it, that I cannot prevent myself from feeling almost heart-broken. It is not only his manner towards myself that has changed, but his general behaviour: he is less reserved in what he says: he speaks more lightly of women. Formerly, he never made jokes upon them in my presence: it seemed as if he respected the whole sex in my person: that is the case no longer. My slightest trouble used to disturb his rest: now, it is the vapours which he advises me to get rid of. He bargains in jewels and horses. What singular complaints! However, I must confess that all this disgusts me. I do not venture to speak to him about it: I am

too much afraid of displeasing him, and of seeming to reproach him about trifles.

I hardly understood Madame de Jully, when I was afraid that she read my heart, and blamed my passion for Francueil. I have just been for a walk with her. I am still quite amazed at what she has said to me. I do not know whether I ought to think well of her or not: I do not venture to pronounce an opinion. The following lengthy conversation took place between us during our walk. We were walking along in silence: "Well," she said to me suddenly, with the indolent air which is natural to her, "now you are quite happy, you can talk with Francueil as much as you please, now that you are no longer afraid of me." "That is true, sister." "The best thing you ever did was to tell me your business: but, at any rate, make yourself at home with me; for it is not enough to talk with one's lover: talk to me about him as long as you like." "If I had to confide my happiness to you, I would be more free with you: but I am afraid of wearying you, and abusing your friendship." "Abuse my friendship! You do not know it then: how can you abuse it? It is that which consoles one for love: one must always look out for a woman to love, when one has a lover. These gentlemen do not want friendship, they find its duties too hard to fulfil. In regard to love, it s different: when they have satisfied it regularly, they think that all is said and done. One must wish what they wish. But you

are not listening—I believe you are crying." "It is true, sister: I am astonished, grieved, and I do not exactly know why." "But what is it that grieves you at this moment?" "I cannot tell: vague suspicions, an uneasiness which, at certain moments, appears to me well founded, but which disappears the next moment —self-contradictory facts." "You should know, sister——" "Do you know anything? Oh! do not tell me. The other day you called me a poor fool: you must have had some reason." "Ah! one cannot tell you anything: you make crimes all at once out of idle nonsense. You must take Francueil as he is——" "If I loved him less, that would be well and good. But—surely you know the reason of his behaviour. Come, I believe he is in love with Madame de Versel. You do not answer. Is he? What do you think?" "I do not think so: but, if it were so, let us see." "If it were so! Ah! I see that I am lost. You are laughing: how can you laugh?" "Very easily: really, sister, you are mad. I assure you that I do not know a word about it: I should not laugh at it if I knew: this certainty, which you attribute to a word uttered at random, is the only thing that made me laugh, I swear to you. But you will kill yourself with that love of yours. Love Francueil; I am quite agreeable: but treat him as he treats you, and how do we know it will not be possible to bring him back by other means? Why not take another lover to console yourself, and enlighten

him upon his fickleness?" "For shame, sister: how can you?" "And why not? Do you prefer to break your heart?" "At least I should die faithful. He will see what he has lost." "Yes; but, before that, you will become ugly—sulky." "I shall become all I can. Sister, I know that I must weary you: let us say no more about it. Our ways of thinking are too opposite: your tone is curious. I have never seen you so . . . We cannot understand each other." "How abruptly you say that to me. I do not love or esteem you less for having opinions different to my own: and, if that makes any change in your feelings towards me, so much the worse for you. As for wearying me, by way of retaliation, my child, let me tell you that I love too: I must have liberty to speak of it to you, and to communicate with my lover, through you, when I please: to see him at your house . . ." "Your lover!" "Well! you seem petrified. Because you have married the eldest son, you seem to think that you are to have the sole enjoyment of the family privileges." "My dear sister, I really cannot help . . ." "Laughing: for that is what you are inclined to do, and that is the best thing for both of us. Have done with your prudery: we are alone, we can trust each other, there need be no constraint between us." "I thought that you loved your husband. He loves you so much. I did not think you had anything to complain of in him. That is what causes my astonishment." "That deserves explanation. I have no cause of com-

plaint against M. de Jully. I have great esteem and friendship for him, but I have never had any other feeling." "I thought that you had married him for love, and that you were passionately fond of him." "He was good enough to believe it, but it has never really been the case. The truth is this. De B—— was madly in love with me, and wanted to marry me: I should have consented, for I was fond enough of him, but I found that he was so violent-tempered, so jealous, so unjust—for jealousy in a man is nothing but injustice and tyranny, make no mistake about that—that his character alarmed me. M. de Jully came upon the scene: I preferred him: that is all." "But all the offers which he has told me twenty times you refused for him . . ." "He is quite right: I have refused several: but they were not worth considering. The better I know M. de Jully, the more I approve of my choice. He is a good fellow, obliging, weak, without nerve, but free from vice: in a word, he is just the man to play his part decently, and I am grateful to him: at least, that is a great merit. For the rest, he thought he was in love with me, but I assure you he was mistaken." "What do you mean, sister? he loves you as much as he did the first day." "Does he say so? well, he is mistaken again. There is a girl at the Comedy to whom he is making presents all day long. He would have kept her, had he not published his passion for me: but, really, he is the man whom I see least in the

world, and who carries out my wishes less than anyone." "Sister, sister, you are unjust. Can you deny that his whole thought is how he can please you?" "What! because he is always giving me jewels to which I attach no value, and dresses which he chooses nearly always contrary to my taste; because he takes boxes at the theatre for me on days when I want to stay at home? Don't you see that it is his own fancies that he is humouring, not mine? Ask him to give up one of his whims or inclinations in favour of mine: you will soon see this jewel of a husband become, with the greatest gentleness, the most despotic sultan: nothing would be easier than to make of him a man who would be quite unbearable: the only thing necessary would be to treat him with a great deal of sentiment and condescension." "You speak like an angel, sister: you are admirable: but may I die if you mean a word of all that you say: at least, your conduct belies you, for you are gentleness and complaisance personified. You seem to have only one will between the two." "No doubt: that is the great secret. With a character like M. de Jully's, it is not so much a question of always having a will, as of having taught him, on certain important occasions, that I have one, which only bends when I am pleased to allow it. He knows that it is there: that is enough. For the rest, complaisance costs me nothing: in the course of life there are so few things which deserve to be treated as of importance. But we have wan-

dered from what I wanted to confide in you. I love, I told you; do you know whom?" "No, truly: perhaps Maurepaire?" "No, Jelyotte." "Jelyotte! You don't mean it, sister: an operatic performer! a man who has the eyes of all upon him, and who cannot with decency be considered your friend." "Gently, if you please: I have told you that I loved him, and you answer me as if I were asking you whether I should do right to love him." "That is true: but you told me at the same time that you wanted me to assist you, and I declare that I will neither be the confidante of M. Jelyotte, nor assist his amours." "You are deciding rather hastily, my dear sister, and I should not like to hear you use the same language twice. It is not a question of my lover's name: it is a question of obliging me: will you do so or not?" "As for you, sister, I shall never be able to refuse you anything: but it is necessary . . ." "Very good. Now, tell me, is not Jelyotte an estimable man? Does not everybody consider him above his position?" "That is true, and this very expression condemns you: the world will never forgive you." "Well, my child, the world is a fool, and one who listens to it at the expense of his happiness is a still greater fool. In short, Jelyotte arrives here this evening: you must put him in the blue room next to mine. During dinner, I shall complain of the noise my husband makes when he goes out hunting in the morning: then you will offer to give him the little room behind

mine: I shall accept: and all will go right." "Ah!" I said, "if that is all you require of me, I don't mind that." "What did you think, then, if you please? You might have trusted to me, sister, and felt sure that I would never compromise you. If a third party had overheard our conversation, he would have thought—ah! I really do not venture to tell you which of us two has compromised herself the most. Let us say no more about it."

Here we were interrupted. Madame de Jully complained, as she had told me she would, of the noise of the huntsmen. I whispered to her: "You are tricking us all, sister, for I believe that you have also given your husband the hint to answer exactly what you want." "I am sure," she replied, "that it is doing him a service."

In fact, he was the first to ask for another room: "for, really," said he to Madame de Jully, "if I wake you in the morning, you make it up to me at night, when you come to bed." I undertook to settle matters between them, by arranging their rooms as I had promised my sister. In the evening, Jelyotte arrived: happiness sparkled in their eyes. This tempting picture reminded me of happier times, and made me shed tears. Francueil perceived it: he was already in Jelyotte's confidence, for, as you know, he is an old friend of his. He came up to me and, looking at me very affectionately, said in a low voice: "Shall they be the only ones who are happy?" "No," I said, "if you love me." He squeezed my hand, and during the whole evening was more

attentive, more affectionate than I had seen him for a long time. He gave me his hand after supper to return to the drawing-room. "You are killing me," I said to him, "if I must pay for this evening with as many tears as I have already shed over it, rather leave me in this indifference to which I find it so difficult to get accustomed." He looked at me tenderly without saying a word: the next moment, he disappeared, and walked alone in the garden for nearly an hour. No one knew what had become of him. Someone proposed that we should go for a few minutes' fresh air: we found him at the corner of a drive: he was walking energetically, as far as we could judge in the darkness from the noise which he made as he approached us. He offered me his arm, or rather he seized mine with an eagerness which seemed to me quite as singular as the rest of his conduct. I enjoyed these delicious moments without seeking to discover the cause of it, as I had sought that of his absence. We remained nearly two hours in the garden. Ah! why is not Francueil always the same? He goes to Paris to-day: he has promised only to stay twenty-four hours there, and then to return: but I do not count upon it.

CONTINUATION OF THE DIARY.

Duclos came to dinner to-day. It did not need a long examination on his part to discover Jelyotte's feelings. From Madame de Jully's eyes glances escaped from time to time which belied

her outward indolence. To judge by the progress that Jelyotte has made in her affections, and the manner in which she has spoken to me of it, as compared with her usual behaviour, I cannot help thinking that her desires are eager rather than sincere. Duclos, with his usual politeness, came to me and said: "What are you doing with Jelyotte quite at home in your house? Put a stop to that. The rejected of a duchess can only cause ridicule: I believe that he has set his mind on your sister." I laughed at the idea, as if I thought it absurd: but he confirmed what she had told me, that M. de Jully is no longer in love with her, and that he is trying to hook on to an actress at the Comedy *incognito*. In the afternoon, Duclos could not stand it: he was obliged to speak again. "This is what will happen," he said to me. "Jelyotte has made himself quite at home here: he will put himself on a footing of friendship with you: he will make himself familiar with you, and you will be supposed to be his mistress or his very obliging friend: for your sister will be sure to demand it of you with her despotic gentleness. You don't say a word. Perhaps it is already done? H'm! Speak then." I said to him laughingly, "I admire the road your head is travelling. All that you say is . . ." "What!" he rejoined; "all that I tell you is true. All the obliging fools whom you have about you will not tell you. Once again, I say that he is not a man of whom one can make a friend." I was quite as convinced of

that as he was, but I contented myself with thanking him for his zeal and advice, assuring him that my reputation would never have anything to fear from M. Jelyotte. Francueil has arrived. Ah, well! these are the happinesses which kill me. He has brought M. Rousseau, who has returned. He seemed to me to be somewhat alarmed at finding so many people. He is accordingly going away to-morrow. I pressed him to return when we were alone: he gave me a polite answer to my invitation.

*The following day.*

What does this mean? Madame de Versel informs Madame de Jully that she is tired of not seeing her, and that, if she dared, she would come and ask me to invite her to dinner in order to spend a few hours with her, and talk about the plans for their visit. Guess what this visit is, my dear guardian? It is to go and spend a fortnight with Madame la Comtesse d'Houdetot, whom she does not know, together with M. and Madame de Jully, Francueil, M. de Maurepaire, and M. de Versel. If Francueil cared the least about me, would he think of going away? Would he not wait until I go to visit the Comtesse d'Houdetot myself? But how can Madame de Jully lend herself to that? Can she agree to part from Jelyotte unless she is obliged?

I have been unable to get off asking Madame de Versel to dinner. Ah! how I dislike the

idea of seeing her at my house! Francueil has said nothing to me about this visit: but I have spoken to him of it myself, perhaps in too strong terms, for, after all, I have no proof, and what right have I to suspect this woman?

Ah! how I am to be pitied! One who is happy and secure in happiness entertains no suspicions; but one who is discontented and restless has lost his own tranquillity, and cannot apparently allow others to enjoy any. I have said all that I ought not to have said, and I am continually acting in opposition to my interests. I am right: I am to be pitied, and I end by doing wrong and being blamed. How harshly he received and listened to me! he whose heart is so tender, who takes such pleasure in doing good!

So then, she is coming to-morrow, this little woman, and I must prepare to receive her kindly, to show her a thousand marks of friendship, as if I were delighted to see her.

CONTINUATION OF THE DIARY.

She has arrived. Ah! she is undoubtedly very pretty. I got out of our first meeting pretty well. Francueil had been very amiable during the morning: he had spent nearly two hours in my room. However, my heart beat when Madame de Versel arrived. Up to the present, he has not taken too much notice of her, and has devoted himself to me and my sister. We talked of the visit, but so vaguely, that I

really hope it will not take place. Madame de Versel, however, seems to have set her heart upon it: but Francueil has only taken notice of what has been said about it to raise further difficulties. In truth, I reproach myself for my suspicions: I believe he did not deserve them. I was unjust. Ah! how I wish it were so!

END OF VOL. I

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